

The Holy Word for Morning Revival

2016 Winter Training

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (1)

Semiannual Training

(December 26-31, 2016)

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (1)

Banners:

The most important matter for a person who serves the Lord is that he must see visions of God; under the visions from God we are directed toward God's destination, and our life is controlled according to God's economy.

God needs a group of living creatures who can coordinate together as one corporate entity, the corporate Christ, for His expression, move, and administration; their coordination is not in themselves but in God and by the divine power, the divine strength, and the divine grace.

We need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord, that is, have a clear fellowship with Him; in our spiritual experience, to have the throne above a clear sky is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life.

Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Lord Jesus was brought to the throne, and as the Pioneer and Forerunner, He cut the path to the throne and led the way to the throne so that we may follow for the fulfillment of God's desire to bring us to the throne.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (1)

TITLE

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WEEK 1 —OUTLINE

Visions of God and the Unveiling of God's Purpose and the Desire of His Heart

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:1, 3, 16; 8:3; 40:4; Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:18

<< DAY 1 >>

I. "The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1):

A. The heavens were opened to Ezekiel (v. 1):

1. The opening of the heavens was God's special visitation; the heavens were opened also to Jacob (Gen. 28:11-17), to Jesus (Matt. 3:16-17), to Stephen (Acts 7:56), to Peter (10:11), and to John (Rev. 4:2; 19:11).
2. Ezekiel stood in the position of a priest, one who was seeking God and contacting God and who was connected to the heavens (Ezek. 1:3):
 - a. Ezekiel was carrying out his priesthood in the spirit, serving God and fellowshiping with God, so that the heavens were opened, and he saw the glorious vision of God being life to man so that He and man could be built together (vv. 4, 16; 40:1—48:35).
 - b. The heavens were opened to Ezekiel and could even come down to earth, enabling God's heavenly things to be seen by people on earth and to be fulfilled among them on earth (Rev. 1:1, 9; Gen. 28:17).

<< DAY 2 >>

3. Whenever God finds a man on earth who is one with Him and whose heart is a duplication of His heart, the heavens are opened to him (Matt. 3:16).
- ##### B. Ezekiel saw visions of God—divine, spiritual, heavenly visions—in his spirit under an opened heaven (Ezek. 1:1; 8:3; cf. Rev. 1:10-11; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10):
1. God's visions are His revelations, which enable us to see divine, spiritual, and heavenly things (Ezek. 40:4; cf. Eph. 1:17-18).
 2. What we present to the children of God should be visions of God, which we have seen in our spirit under the opened heavens through our contact with God (Acts 26:16-19; cf. S.S. 1:15; 7:4).
 3. These visions will lead to the building up of God's churches (Matt. 16:18).
 4. The most important matter for a person who serves the Lord is that he must see visions of God (Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19):
 - a. In the Bible vision denotes an extraordinary scene; it refers to a special kind of seeing—a glorious, inward seeing—and to the spiritual scenery that we

see from God (Dan. 7:1, 9-10, 13-14).

b. In order to see a vision, we need revelation, light, and sight (Eph. 1:17-18).

c. Visions of God govern us, restrict us, control us, preserve us, revolutionize us, give us the boldness to go on, and keep us in the genuine oneness (Prov. 29:18a).

d. Under the visions from God we are directed toward God's destination, and our life is controlled according to God's economy (Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:4).

« DAY 3 »

5. We need the kind of prayer that brings us into a trance and that brings a heavenly vision to us (Acts 10:9-16; 22:17-21):

a. A trance means that we have been brought out of our self; we may be imprisoned in the self, but we need to pray ourselves out of that imprisonment.

b. To be in a trance is to be out of our self, and in that trance we receive visions from God (10:10-11; 22:17-18).

C. God wanted Ezekiel not only to behold with his eyes but also to hear with his ears; hence, He gave him His words along with His visions (Ezek. 40:4):

1. God's word to Ezekiel was not an ordinary word but an express word, a special word (1:3).

2. God's words are His explanations of His visions.

3. We need to have an express word from the Lord (John 6:63; S.S. 8:13):

a. God wants to give us special, fresh, and vivid words that convey His divine visions (1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Pet. 4:11a).

b. We should ask God for words that will enable us to understand the visions, and we need the words that will enable us to proclaim and explain what we have seen (Ezek. 3:1-4).

D. God's hand always follows His speaking; thus, the hand of Jehovah was upon Ezekiel (1:3):

1. God will come in to do what He says and to work according to His speaking (v. 3; Psa. 33:9).

« DAY 4 »

2. God's hand upon man is for leading and directing man and for causing man to take action (cf. 1 Kings 18:46; Dan. 11:32b; John 7:6, 8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

3. May we all have an opened heaven, see God's visions, receive God's words, and have God's leading and directing hand upon us to meet God's need.

II. Ezekiel 1 unveils to us the desire of God's heart and the purpose that He wants to accomplish (vv. 4-5, 26; Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:10; Phil. 2:13; Gen. 1:26):

A. The biblical term that refers to the desire of God's heart is the good pleasure of His will; the good pleasure of God's will is the desire of God's heart (Eph. 1:5):

« DAY 5 »

1. The Triune God's economy was made according to His good pleasure, and His good pleasure comes out of His heart's desire (vv. 9-10; 3:9-11).

2. Out of the desire of God's heart, His good pleasure, is God's purpose, and out of this purpose is His economy (1 Tim. 1:4).

3. Our inward joy is an indication that God is operating in us for His good pleasure and that we are living and walking according to His good pleasure, the desire of His heart (Phil. 2:13).

B. Ezekiel 1 unveils God's desire to be expressed in His Son (Heb. 1:3).

C. The One signified by the glowing electrum, the Lamb-God, dwells within us as a priceless treasure for His expression (2 Cor. 4:7).

D. The four faces of the four living creatures signify the complete and adequate expression of Christ (Ezek. 1:5-6, 10):

1. The four living creatures signify a corporate entity, the corporate Christ—the corporate expression of God; when God gains such a corporate expression, His purpose will be accomplished (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 3:10-11).

2. The vision in Ezekiel 1 shows us that we need to be corporate and that we need to be in coordination (vv. 4-5, 12).

« DAY 6 »

E. "Upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man" (v. 26):

1. The One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him is the likeness of the glory of Jehovah (v. 28), indicating that the One sitting on the throne is both God and man; this is Jesus Christ, the God-man, the mingling of God and man.

2. As revealed in the Bible, God's mysterious intention in His relationship with man is to mingle Himself with man and thereby to become the same as man and make man the same as He is in life, in nature, and in expression but not in the Godhead (John 1:12-14; 1 John 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:29).

3. The One on the throne and the four living creatures both have the appearance of a man, indicating that the four living creatures on earth are the expression of the One on the throne; this is the manifestation of God in humanity (Ezek. 1:5, 26; 1 Tim. 3:15-16).

F. The Bible as a whole, and the book of Ezekiel as a miniature of the Bible, reveal that God's eternal intention is to dispense Himself into His chosen people, making them the same as He is in His life, His nature, and His image but not in the Godhead (Eph. 3:15-16):

1. God's goal is that His redeemed and regenerated people into whom He is working Himself in Christ will be mingled with Him as one entity and be built together in Him to be His eternal habitation, the New Jerusalem (John 14:20; Eph. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12; Rev. 21:2, 10-11).
2. This is the central point of the revelation of the Bible and also of the visions presented in the book of Ezekiel (Eph. 1:17-23; 3:15-21; Rev. 21:2, 10-11).

« WEEK 1 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:1 ...While I was among the captives by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

3 The word of Jehovah came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of Jehovah was upon him there.

The opening of the heavens is God's special visitation. Whenever people on earth are one with God, the heavens will be opened to them. In the land of captivity there was a man, Ezekiel, who was mature and who was one with God, and the heavens were opened to him. Today the principle is the same. We need the heavens to be opened to us, but in order for the heavens to be opened in our experience, we need to be Ezekiels. If we are today's Ezekiels, we will have an open heaven. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 18)

Today's Reading

The first time the Bible mentions the heavens being opened was when Jacob was wandering in his attempt to escape his brother Esau. He had a dream, and in that dream the heavens were opened to him (Gen. 28:11-17). This signified that God intended to gain Jacob as His beachhead on earth so that the heavens could be opened to the earth. When the Lord Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened to declare that there was a man on earth who was one with God in the heavens (Matt. 3:16-17). When Stephen was martyred, the heavens were opened up to him (Acts 7:56). When the Lord Jesus comes back, the heavens will be opened once again. It is a great blessing for God's children to have the heavens opened to them.

After the earth had been occupied by Satan and the people on earth had been damaged by Satan, God could not come to earth, and the heavens, where God is, could not be opened to the people on earth. This was the situation at Ezekiel's time. The people of Israel had been damaged by Satan and carried away into captivity, and, as a result, the heavens could not be opened to them. However, among those in captivity, there was a priest who was seeking God and contacting Him and who was connected to the heavens. The heavens could therefore be opened to him and even come down to the earth, enabling God's heavenly things to be seen by people on earth and to be fulfilled among them on earth. This was truly a great matter.

Ezekiel 1:3 speaks explicitly of "Ezekiel the priest." As a priest Ezekiel was one who lived in the presence of God, serving God and being mingled with God. Ezekiel was this kind of person. Although he was in the land of captivity, he still lived in the presence of God and ministered before God. He was by the river Chebar, not in the holy temple, yet as a priest he looked to God, prayed to God, contacted God, fellowshiped with God, and waited for God. Because Ezekiel was such a person and contacted God in such a way, the heavens were opened to him, and he "saw visions of God" (v. 1).

We encourage all the brothers and sisters in the Lord to serve Him as priests. We all need to learn to pray to God, to contact God, to have fellowship with God, and to live before God. If we exercise as priests in this way, the heavens will be opened to us, and we will see God's visions.

Not only are the books of Ezekiel and Revelation similar in content, but the authors of these books are similar in certain respects. The most important similarity is that the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle John were both priests before God. Although Ezekiel was a prophet, when he saw the visions recorded in his book, he stood in the position of a priest, having the status of a priest (Ezek. 1:3) and also the life of a priest. As he was by the river Chebar, he surely was carrying out his priesthood in the spirit, serving God and fellowshiping with God, so that the heavens were opened and he saw the glorious vision of God being life to man so that He and man could be built together. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 18, 16, 3)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 1; CWWL, 1975-1976, vol. 2, "Young People's Training," ch. 1

« WEEK 1 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 40:4 And the man said to me, Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart on all that I show you, because for this purpose you have been brought here, that it may be shown to you. Tell all that you see to the house of Israel.

Acts 26:19 ...I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

God's plan is hidden in heaven. When God finds a man on earth after His heart, heaven is opened to him. It was opened to Jacob (Gen. 28:12-17), to Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1), to Jesus (Matt. 3:16), to Stephen (Acts 7:56), and to Peter (Acts 10:11). In Revelation 4:1, and in 19:11, it is opened to John,...and it will be opened to all believers in the Lord in eternity (John 1:51). (Life-study of Revelation, p. 213)

Today's Reading

God's visions are His revelations, which enable His people to see divine, spiritual, heavenly things. Ezekiel saw spiritual, heavenly visions in his spirit (cf. Eph. 3:3-5; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10) under an opened heaven, and he presented these visions to God's people that they might be recovered from their captivity for the building up of God's dwelling place. (Ezek. 1:1, footnote 4)

All the churches and all the saints need to see heavenly visions. Therefore, what we present to the children of God should not be mere teaching or doctrine or knowledge gained from reading but a vision we have seen in spirit under the open heavens through our contact with God. This will cause God's people to be recovered from their captivity, and it will lead to the building up of God's churches. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 19)

The most important matter for a person who serves the Lord is that he must have a vision. Everyone who serves the Lord must be a person with a vision. Not all the brothers and sisters will have a vision directly from the Lord; some of them will see a vision indirectly through the help of others....If a person has a vision, his service is a service with a vision. The apostle Paul said that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19). He served for his whole life according to the vision he had received. (Our Vision—Christ and the Church, p. 7)

Vision denotes an extraordinary scene....In the Bible vision refers to the scenery we see from God. Through His Word God has opened the veil, but we must see the scenes contained in the Word. Whatever we see through God's revelation is a vision. (The Revelation and Vision of God, p. 9)

I hope that every one serving the Lord in His recovery would have this glorious vision breaking and shining upon him at least once. This is not a matter of any outward seeing. Rather, it is a definite and glorious inward seeing. (The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, p. 11)

In order to have the vision we need the revelation, the eyes, and the light. Praise the Lord that we are not in religion, a maze, or darkness but in a vision! (CWWL, 1978, vol. 1, "Basic Training," p. 283)

Such a vision from God will always direct our steps and control our living. This was true even in the Old Testament, where we are told that without vision the people will cast off restraint (Prov. 29:18a). Under the heavenly vision we are directed toward God's destination, and our life is controlled according to God's economy.

If we would know the truth, we need to see the vision of God's economy. I can testify that years ago I was caught by this vision. Because we have seen it, we can press on in spite of suffering, defamation, and all kinds of trouble.

This vision has become the principle that directs our steps and that governs our way....We take this way [of the Lord in His recovery] because we have been caught by the vision of God's economy. Because we have seen this vision, throughout the years heavenly light has been flooding into the Lord's recovery. The reason for this light is that we are under this vision. Whenever we come to the Word of God, the light shines because we are in this directing, controlling, governing vision. (Life-study of Mark, pp. 452-453)

Further Reading: The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, ch. 1; The Triune God's Revelation and His Move, msgs. 1, 4

« WEEK 1 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 10:10-11 And he became very hungry and wanted to eat. And while they were preparing, a trance came upon him; and he beheld heaven opened, and a certain vessel like a great sheet descending, being let down by four corners onto the earth.

Acts 10:9-16 shows us the prayer that brought Peter into a trance and brought a heavenly vision to him. This prayer at the appointed time (v. 9) brought Peter into a conversation with the Lord (vv. 13-16). This is another principle of prayer. To pray is to pray ourselves into a trance. A trance means that we have gotten out of our self. We may be imprisoned in our self, but we need to pray out of that imprisonment. In a trance, in a situation in which we are out of our self, we can receive visions of God. We all need a trance because we remain in our self too long....Our self is a strong prison that we need to get out of, so we need to pray ourselves into a trance. Many times in morning watch, while we are reading the Bible and pray-reading, we have the sensation that we are out of our self and that we are in a situation of being so close to God. We cannot tell where we are. We just know that we are out of our self. That is a trance, and in that trance we receive visions from God. (The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, p. 95)

Today's Reading

God not only gave His visions to Ezekiel—He also gave him His words. Visions are God's revelations, which cause us to see something. God's words are His explanations, which cause us to hear something. Because God wanted Ezekiel not only to behold with his eyes but also to hear with his ears (Ezek. 40:4), He gave him words along with His visions. He explained His visions with His words.

The words that came to Ezekiel were not common or ordinary; they were special. The words given to Ezekiel, being special, fresh, and vivid, are different from the words given to Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. In fact, they are different from the words in any other book of the Bible. When we read the book of Ezekiel, we sense that the words in this book are special. The words in Ezekiel are God's special words, which came in a particular way to a man who was in close contact with God.

Ezekiel 1:3a says, "The word of Jehovah came expressly to Ezekiel the priest." This was not an ordinary word—it was an express word. Today, we also need not an ordinary word but an express word. For such an express word, do not go to the expositions of the Bible, and do not go even to the books of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. You need to have an express word from the Lord. With Ezekiel, the heavens were opened, the visions came, and the word came expressly.

Those who are ministers of God's words need God to give them not only visions but also special words, fresh words. We need to see God's heavenly visions, and we need to hear God's special words. We need the words that will enable us to understand the visions, and we need the words that will enable us to proclaim and explain what we have seen. May God's words come to us expressly along with God's visions!

Ezekiel 1:3b goes on to say, "The hand of Jehovah was upon him there." Here we see that the hand of the Lord follows the word of the Lord. The sequence is significant: the open heavens, the visions, the word of God, and the hand of God. God's hand always follows His speaking. Whatever He says, He does. If what we minister is truly God's word, God's hand will follow. However, if you minister many things and nothing happens, this means that you have a babbling mouth, but God's hand is not working. You need God's almighty hand to work out what you are speaking.

Today we need the heavens opened; we need the vision coming to us; we need the word of the Lord to come expressly to us; and we need the hand of the Lord to be upon us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 20-21)

Further Reading: The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, pp. 93-98; Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 2

« WEEK 1 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 33:9 For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood.

Eph. 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

The one who speaks God's express word may be an insignificant person, but God's hand is not an insignificant matter. God will come in to do what He says and to work according to His speaking.

God's hand upon man is also for leading man and for causing one to take action (cf. 1 Kings 18:46). The visions are for seeing; the words are for hearing; and the hand is for action. The Lord's hand upon Ezekiel held him, led him, lifted him, and carried him so that he could take action. After the Lord's hand came upon Ezekiel, everything he did was due to the leading and directing of the Lord's hand. God's hand led and directed Ezekiel as a person who spoke for God. His every action was under God's hand. Wherever he went, whatever he did, and how he acted and behaved were all due to God's leading and directing hand. Whether he was bound or free, whether he mourned or rejoiced, whether he went or came—everything was under the leading and directing of God's hand. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 21)

Today's Reading

A man who speaks for God no longer has his own freedom and can no longer do things according to his own convenience. If God's hand leads him to go to a certain place, he must go there. If God's hand directs him to do a certain thing, he must do it. His actions are according to the leading of God's hand and are under the strict directing of God's hand. Where he goes and what he does are not according to his choice but are under and according to the leading and directing hand of God. This requires the one who speaks for God to pay a considerable price.

Every minister of God's word needs to fulfill the four conditions for seeing God's visions. Everyone who speaks God's words in a normal way must be one to whom the heavens are opened, one who has seen God's visions, one to whom God's words have come expressly, and one who has God's hand upon him.

May we all have an open heaven, see God's visions, receive God's words, and have God's leading and directing hand upon us. God needs such persons today, and the church also needs them. May we all become such persons to meet God's need!

It is crucial for us to realize that Ezekiel 1 shows us the desire of God's heart and unveils to us the purpose that God wants to accomplish. As we read this chapter, we may think that it speaks merely about four living creatures. However, if we read this chapter carefully, we will see that it speaks of God's desire to be expressed in His Son. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 21-22, 79)

God's eternal purpose is of His will. Now we need to see that God's will is according to God's good pleasure (Eph. 1:9). God's good pleasure is His heart pleasure, which we may call the desire of His heart. Our God is living, loving, and purposeful. The living, loving, and purposeful God surely has a desire. Every living thing and especially every living person has a desire, a good pleasure. If we desire pleasure, then certainly God does also. Only something dead or nonliving has no such need. The more living we are, the more pleasure we need. The degree of our livingness determines how much pleasure we need. Because God is certainly the most living One, He surely needs the most pleasure. If we, as fallen sinners, require pleasure, then how much more does God, the living One, have a deep need for it. The book of Ephesians reveals that God needs pleasure; it reveals the desire of God's heart. The biblical term for "the desire of God's heart" is the good pleasure of His will. The good pleasure of God's will is the desire of God's heart. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2049)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 68; Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 7

« WEEK 1 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance...

2 Cor. 4:7 ...We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

The economy of the Triune God is for Him to dispense Himself into His chosen and redeemed people to make them His expression....God is a living person, full of feeling. He has His heart's desire. Out of God's heart's desire is God's good pleasure. Out of this pleasure is God's purpose, and out of this purpose is His economy. The entire Bible is the contents of God's economy. (The God-man Living, p. 116)

Today's Reading

We Christians should be an emotional people. When we are with others, they should sense something exciting about us. In those years at Elden hall in Los Angeles, our neighbors called us the "hallelujah people." We were excited enough to be singing and praising the Lord even while we walked on the streets.

What makes us so happy? It is because we have the very God working within us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure. How do we know that we are living a life according to God's good pleasure? It is because of our sense of happiness. When we are happy, we are registering God's happiness within us. Our inward joy is an indication that we are living and walking according to His good pleasure. (CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Life Messages, Volume 1" p. 422)

As the electrum, the Lord Jesus is the One who has redeemed us and who is everything to us. He is our God, our Lamb, our Redeemer, our jasper, and our sardius. If we consider our spiritual experience, we will realize that the One who dwells within us today is the Lamb-God, the One signified by the electrum.

In the sight of God, before we were saved, we were base and wicked, having nothing that was honorable or glorious. Praise the Lord that He saved us and regenerated us! His wind, His cloud, and His burning fire have made it possible for us to have Him, the redeeming God, within us as the glowing electrum. Now we have Him as the treasure in the earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7), and we have thereby become a people of honor and glory. We need to consider how precious and honorable is the Christ who is within us. As the electrum within us, He is the treasure of incomparable worth....The more we pass through the wind, the cloud, and the fire, the more the electrum is constituted into our being, making us a people who are filled with the Triune God and who manifest His glory.

The four faces of the living creatures signify the complete and adequate expression of Christ. Furthermore, the four living creatures with their four faces signify a coordinated, corporate entity, the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). This corporate Christ is the corporate expression of God among human beings.

Today many Christians think that the reason for believing in the Lord Jesus is that they may have peace and well being in the present and that in the future they may go to heaven to enjoy eternal bliss. This thought falls far short of the divine revelation. In Ezekiel 1 God reveals that He needs a group of living creatures who can coordinate together as one entity for His expression, move, and administration. When God gains such a corporate expression, His purpose will be accomplished.

We cannot be Christians in isolation. Basically, as believers in Christ we are a collective entity, and we cannot do anything alone. The vision in Ezekiel 1 shows us that we need to be corporate and that we need to be in coordination....Coordination is necessary for God's expression. We have pointed out that the four living creatures are for God's expression in Christ. In order for God to have a corporate expression of Himself in Christ, we need to be joined together and knit together with all the saints and thereby become one entity. If we are isolated, we cannot express Christ adequately. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 35, 79-80, 82)

Further Reading: The God-man Living, msg. 13; Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 8

« WEEK 1 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.

26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

[In Ezekiel 1:26b] we are told that the One on the throne looks like a man. This is absolutely different from the human concept and also different from the religious concept, including the concept widely held in today's Christianity. Mainly, our concept is that the One on the throne is the mighty God. Have you ever thought that the Lord on the throne is not only the mighty God but is also a man? Oh, the One who sits on the throne is a man! However, verse 28 speaks of "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah." The One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him there is the appearance of the glory of Jehovah. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 123)

Today's Reading

In the Bible there is a mysterious thought concerning the relationship between God and man. God's desire is to become the same as man is and to make man the same as He is. This means that God's intention is to mingle Himself with man and thereby make Himself like man and make man like Him. The Lord Jesus is the God-man; He is the complete God and the perfect man. We may also say that He is the Man-God. The One whom we worship today is the Man-God. Furthermore, to be a man of God, as Moses was (Deut. 33:1; Josh. 14:6; Psalms 90, title), is to be a God-man, a man who is mingled with God. It is a delight to God that all His chosen and redeemed people would be God-men.

If we would live out God and express God, we need to be a man and have the appearance of a man. Ezekiel 1:5 says that the four living creatures have the appearance of a man, and verse 26 says that the One on the throne has the appearance of a man. The crucial point here is that because man was created in the image of God in order to express God, only man is like God. A person must have the appearance of a man in order to live out the image of God and therefore express God. If we want to live out God and express God, we must be a man and have the appearance of a man. Anyone who does not have the appearance of a man cannot express God. The One on the throne and the four living creatures both have the appearance of a man, indicating that the four living creatures on earth are the expression of the One on the throne.

In Ezekiel 1 the One on the throne is the union of God and man. Thus, the place where the throne is, is the place where heaven and earth are joined. The One on the throne is God, but He manifests the appearance of a man. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was God manifest in the flesh, for He was the God-man and had the appearance of a man. Inwardly, He was God, but His appearance on earth was the appearance of a man. Now, as the One on the throne after His ascension, He is still the God-man; He is God, yet with the appearance of a man.

In the church life today, there should be a condition where God is manifested in man. This means that in the church we should have...the expression in man of the One who is on the throne. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 124-126)

The Bible as a whole, and the book of Ezekiel as a miniature of the Bible, reveal that God's eternal intention is to dispense Himself into His chosen people, making them the same as He is in His life, His nature, and His image but not in His Godhead, that they might be mingled with Him as one entity and be built together in Him to be His eternal habitation, the New Jerusalem. This is the central point of the revelation of the Bible and also of the four visions presented in the book of Ezekiel. (Ezek. 1:1, footnote 4)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 12; CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Life Messages, Volume 1," msg. 31, 33

« WEEK 1 —HYMN

Hymns, #1220

Remove the veils, Lord, from my heart

The Church — The Vision

1220

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, key of D major (indicated by two sharps), and common time (C). It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: G, C, D/C, G/B, C, G/D, D, G, Em, G/D, C, D, G, C/G, G, G/B, C, D/C, Bm, C, G/D, D, G, D/F#, Em, G/D, C, D7, G. A box labeled 'Chorus' is placed above the eighth measure. The lyrics are: 1. Re - move the veils, Lord, from my heart; True rev - e - la - tion grant to me; A vi - sion clear, O Lord, im - part Of Thy re - cov - er - y. (C) Of Thy re - cov - er - y. Of Thy re - cov - er - y. A vi - sion clear, O Lord, im - part Of Thy re - cov - er - y.

2. By revelation I perceive
The power that raised Christ from the dead;
When I by faith this power receive,
I to the church am led.

3. Thy mighty power has set me free
From all the world's distracting things;
An entrance to the local church
This mighty power brings.

4. Once in the local church, I need
To take Thee as my person, Lord;
My outward man each day recede,
My heart is for the Lord.

5. I take Thee as my person, Lord;
I have been crucified with Thee.
My inner man has been restored;
I'm now indwelt by Thee.

6. When all Thy members self forsake,
Thy glorious Body, Lord, is known;
When of Thy Person we partake,
The one new man is shown.

7. The church life is the one new man
In every local church expressed;
Thy Body is a corporate man,
One Person manifest.

(Repeat the last two lines of each stanza)

WEEK 2 —OUTLINE

The Spiritual History of a Normal Christian— the Wind, the Cloud, the Fire, and the Electrum

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:4; John 3:8; Acts 2:2, 4a; Heb. 12:29; Rev. 4:3; 22:1; 21:23; 2 Cor. 4:6-7

<< DAY 1 >>

I. In Ezekiel 1:4 the storm wind from the north is a figure, a picture, of the powerful Spirit of God (Acts 2:2, 4a):

A. A storm wind coming from the north indicates that the mighty Spirit comes from God (Psa. 75:6-7a; 48:2; cf. Isa. 14:13-14):

1. God, who is at the north, is always up; spiritually speaking, when we are going north, we are going up to God.
2. The fact that the storm wind came from the north means that it came from God; this reveals that the dwelling place of God is the source of all spiritual things.

B. In Ezekiel 1:4 the wind is a sign of the blowing of the Holy Spirit upon us to take care of us, causing us to have God's life:

1. The breathing of the Spirit in John 20 is for life, and the blowing of the Spirit in Acts 2 is for God's move.
2. The essential aspect of the Spirit for living is symbolized by the breath; the economical aspect of the Spirit for ministry is symbolized by the rushing violent wind (John 20:22; Acts 2:2, 4a).

C. Our spiritual experiences always begin with a spiritual storm:

1. God's visitation begins with the blowing of the wind of God upon our being (John 3:8; Acts 2:2).
2. The Spirit as the blowing wind brought God to us for our regeneration (John 3:8, 6).
3. A storm wind from the north blows upon us at every turn in our spiritual life:
 - a. This storm wind is God Himself blowing upon us to bring a storm into our life, into our church, and into our work, causing us to be dissatisfied and concerned about our spiritual condition and to have a turn in our spiritual life.
 - b. When the wind blows upon us, we cannot be satisfied with our spiritual condition; instead, we feel restless and concerned about our situation.
4. According to church history, throughout all the generations the Spirit of God has blown like a mighty wind to cause people to repent of their sins, to

believe in the Lord Jesus for their regeneration, to give up the world in order to follow the Lord, and to be desperate in heart and burning in spirit to serve the Lord.

5. Every storm is worth recalling; every storm has a pleasant remembrance; whenever God visits us and revives us, His Spirit blows upon us like a mighty wind.

« DAY 2 »

II. The cloud in Ezekiel 1:4 is a figure of God covering His people:

- A. The cloud here is a figure of God as the Spirit abiding with His people and covering them in order to care for them and show favor to them; when the Holy Spirit comes to us and touches us, He is like the wind; when the Holy Spirit stays with us and overshadows us, He is like the cloud.
- B. The blowing of the wind brings the presence of God to us in the form of a heavenly, brooding, overshadowing cloud (Exo. 14:20, 24; 19:9a; 24:15-18; 40:34-38; Num. 10:34; 1 Cor. 10:1-2).
- C. The cloud is nothing other than the brooding God; God comes as the wind, but He stays as the cloud (cf. Gen. 1:2; Deut. 32:10-13).
- D. We may sense that the grace and glory of God are upon us, covering us as a canopy (2 Cor. 12:9; Isa. 4:5-6).
- E. By staying with us as the cloud, God covers us, overshadows us, and broods over us to give us the enjoyment of His presence; in this way He produces something of Himself in our daily life.
- F. The cloud also signifies God's care for His people and His favor toward them; in His gracious visitation God comes to us like a cloud to care for us and to show favor to us; after God blows upon us, we sense that He is overshadowing us and exercising His care for us; we can sense both His presence and His care (Prov. 16:15).
- G. Together, the wind and the cloud indicate that important spiritual transactions are about to take place between God and His people.

« DAY 3 »

III. According to Ezekiel 1:4, the wind brings in the cloud, and within the cloud is the fire:

- A. The fire seen by Ezekiel signifies God's burning and sanctifying power (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29).
- B. The fact that there is fire in the cloud means that when we are overshadowed by the Spirit, we are enlightened by Him (Exo. 40:38).

- C. In Ezekiel 1:4 fire symbolizes burning power for purging, purifying, sanctifying, and motivating in God's move; whenever God visits us, His holy fire comes to consume in us everything that does not match His holy nature and disposition.
- D. The more the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in us, the more we are purified and enlightened; only what matches the holiness of God can pass through His holy fire; everything that does not match God's holiness must be burned away (Heb. 12:29):
1. This fire will burn away everything other than God, for only God can pass through the burning; we all need to be transformed by being burned (cf. Rev. 21:18-20):
 - a. The fire consumes not only our pride, wickedness, and hatred but also our natural humility, kindness, and love.
 - b. The holy fire burns not only our weak points but also our strong points, including everything in us that we and others admire and appreciate.
 - c. Under the burning of the holy fire, our "I" will fall apart and be dissolved (Isa. 6:5; Dan. 10:4-8; Rev. 1:17a).
 2. As we are under His shining, we should confess our need for His burning and then pray for Him to burn away our self, our old nature, our disposition, our worldliness, and our attitudes, goals, aims, motives, and intentions (cf. Isa. 6:5-7; 1 John 1:7, 9).
 3. As we experience the burning of the consuming fire, God Himself is manifested in us (1 Tim. 3:15-16; Rev. 4:3; 21:10-11).

<< DAY 4 >>

IV. The issue of the blowing of the wind, the covering of the cloud, and the burning of the fire is the glowing electrum—the radiant expression of the redeeming God (Ezek. 1:4):

- A. Electrum is an alloy of gold and silver; gold signifies the nature of God, and silver signifies redemption:
1. Our God is not merely the Divine Being, signified by the gold; He is also the redeeming God, signified by the silver (cf. Rev. 4:3).
 2. According to the book of Revelation, the One on the throne is not just God and not just the Lamb but the Lamb-God, the redeeming God (22:1):
 - a. There is one throne for both God and the Lamb; this indicates that God and the Lamb are one—the Lamb-God, the redeeming God, God the Redeemer.
 - b. God as the light is in the Lamb as the lamp (21:23):
 - (1) Without the Lamb as the lamp, God's shining over us would kill us (1 Tim. 6:16; Psa. 104:1-2a; 1 John 1:5).
 - (2) The Lamb as the lamp expresses God as light in a very pleasant and

approachable way.

(3) Because the divine light shines through the Redeemer, the light is lovable, and we even walk in this light (v. 7).

3.As the electrum, the Lord Jesus is the One who has redeemed us and who is everything to us (Col. 1:14; 2:9-10; 3:4, 11b).

B.The issue of the spiritual transactions involving the blowing wind, the covering cloud, and the purifying fire is the radiant expression of the redeeming God (Ezek. 1:4):

1.The electrum appears from the midst of the fire; this indicates that the burning of the fire is for the manifestation of the electrum.

2.After we have experienced the wind, the cloud, and the fire, the only thing that remains is the glowing electrum, the redeeming God.

3.The more we pass through God's wind, cloud, and fire, the more the Lord is manifested in us in a dignified and glorious way, and we sense that He alone is precious, lovely, bright, and majestic (Matt. 17:1-8; 2 Pet. 1:16-17).

C.The One signified by the glowing electrum, the Lamb-God, dwells within us as a priceless treasure (2 Cor. 4:6-7):

1.The experience of the wind, the cloud, and the fire has made it possible for us to have Him, the redeeming God, within us as the glowing electrum.

2.As the electrum within us, the Lord is the treasure of incomparable worth—a treasure that is wonderful, marvelous, precious, and glorious.

« DAY 5 »

D. The more we experience the blowing wind, the covering cloud, and the consuming fire, the more the electrum is constituted into our being, making us a people who are filled with the Triune God and who manifest His glory (Eph. 3:16-21).

V. The spiritual history of every Christian should be a story of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum (Ezek. 1:4):

A.Every time we are graced by the Lord, we have spiritual transactions with Him involving the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum.

B.Throughout our Christian life, our spiritual experiences should be a continual cycle involving the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum; every time this cycle is repeated, more electrum is constituted into our being and brought forth, making us a people who are filled with the Triune God and who manifest His glory.

« DAY 6 »

VI. As we experience the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the glowing electrum, we become the vision of the glory of God (vv. 1, 28b; Rev. 21:10-11):

A. If in our personal spiritual experience we have the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, then whenever we gather together, we will be the vision of the electrum, having a precious treasure in us that is shining and glowing.

B. “Whatever we experience, enjoy, and realize of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our experience, enjoyment, and realization of the Triune God. He is revealed to such a great extent, and we must experience and enjoy Him to such an extent. Our enjoyment then becomes His testimony, and this living testimony is the present revelation of Jesus Christ. First, He is revealed, then we enjoy Him and become His testimony, and eventually our testimony becomes His present revelation” (God’s New Testament Economy, p. 223).

« WEEK 2 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:4 And I looked, and there came a storm wind from the north, a great cloud and a fire flashing incessantly; and there was a brightness around it, and from the midst of it there was something like the sight of electrum, from the midst of the fire.

Psa. 75:6-7 For neither from the east nor from the west, and neither from the south, does exaltation come; for God is the Judge: He puts this one down and exalts that one.

Ezekiel 1:4 says...that a stormy wind came from the north. Why did the stormy wind come from the north and not from the south, the east, or the west? The answer to this question is found in Psalm 75:6-7a....Here north is replaced with God. This indicates that God is at the north. In geographical terms the north is commonly regarded as up, and thus to go north is to go up. God, who is at the north, is always up. Spiritually speaking, this means that when we are going north, we are going to God. The fact that the stormy wind came from the north means that it came from God. The dwelling place, the habitation, of God is the source of all spiritual things. The stormy wind came from the north, from the habitation of God. God, therefore, was the source of the stormy wind. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 25-26)

Today's Reading

The Hebrew word for wind is ruach. Ruach may be translated "wind" or "breath" or "spirit."...In Ezekiel 1:4 ruach denotes a wind, a stormy wind which signifies nothing less than the powerful Spirit. On the day of Pentecost there was a rushing, mighty wind which filled the house where the one hundred twenty were sitting. Then all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2, 4a). No doubt, that rushing, mighty wind was the powerful Spirit....In Ezekiel 1:4 the strong, stormy wind is a figure, a picture, of the mighty Spirit of God.

In the Bible the wind has both a negative and positive significance. In its negative significance the wind is a symbol, or sign, of God's judgment upon man. This is the significance of the wind in Daniel 7:2 and in Revelation 7:1. In its positive significance the wind is a symbol, or sign, of the blowing of the Holy Spirit upon man or the descending of the Holy Spirit upon man to take care of man. This, of course, is the significance of the rushing, mighty wind in Acts 2....[In Ezekiel the wind also has a] positive significance—in the Spirit's coming to man to cause man to have God's life. The stormy wind in Ezekiel 1 has this positive significance.

Our spiritual experiences always begin with a spiritual storm. According to church history, throughout all the generations the Spirit of God has blown like a mighty wind to move people to repent of their sins, to believe in the Lord Jesus for their regeneration, to give up the world in order to follow the Lord, and to be desperate in heart and burning in spirit to serve the Lord. Have you not had this kind of experience?...If you have never had such experiences, you need to look to the Lord and pray for His wind from the north to blow upon you.

God's visitation always begins with the blowing of the wind of God upon our being....[Perhaps a spiritual storm] caused you to consider the meaning of human life and...to ask yourself about where you came from and where you were going.

A storm comes to us from the Lord not only at the time of our conversion but also after we have been saved....Actually, a stormy wind blows upon us at every turn in our spiritual life. This stormy wind is God Himself blowing upon us to bring a storm into our life, into our work, and into our church. It is truly a grace to have storms coming to us from God. As we are following the Lord, we will experience storm after storm. I cannot say how many storms have come to me, but I can testify that every storm is worth recalling. Every storm has become a pleasant remembrance....Whenever God visits us and revives us, His Spirit blows upon us like a mighty wind. We need to experience the Spirit in this way—the more the better, and the stronger the better. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 26-29)

Further Reading: The Visions of Ezekiel, ch. 2

« WEEK 2 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:4 And I looked, and there came a storm wind from the north, a great cloud...

Exo. 13:21 And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them on the way...

Prov. 16:15 In the light of the king's countenance is life, and his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain.

The cloud always follows the stormy wind. If we have the wind, we will surely have the cloud, for the cloud is the issue of the blowing of the wind. Like the stormy wind, the cloud signifies the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit touches us, He is like the wind. When the Holy Spirit visits us and overshadows us,...He abides with us like a cloud to cover us.

The cloud in Ezekiel 1:4 is a figure of God covering His people. We may use the word brooding and say that the cloud was God brooding over His people. The cloud, therefore, was nothing other than the brooding God. God comes as the wind, but He stays as the cloud. By staying as the cloud, He covers us, overshadows us, and broods over us to give us the enjoyment of His presence, thereby producing something of Himself in our daily life. How wonderful! This is the covering God typified by the covering cloud. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 29)

Today's Reading

By considering the history of the people of Israel, we can understand more fully the significance of the cloud. A number of times God appeared to them and visited them like a great cloud that overshadowed them. For instance, after the Israelites came out of Egypt, they passed through the Red Sea. Concerning this Paul says, "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1-2). The cloud that covered the children of Israel typifies the Spirit of God. Eventually, the children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai and camped there. In Exodus 19:9 the Lord said to Moses, "I am coming to you in a thick cloud," and there was "a thick cloud upon the mountain" (v. 16). In chapter 24 we are told that "the cloud covered the mountain," that the Lord "called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud," and that "Moses entered into the midst of the cloud" (vv. 15, 16, 18). Later, after the Tent of Meeting was set up for God, God's glory filled the tent and a cloud covered it and abode upon it (40:34-35). All the people could see that the cloud was covering the Tent of Meeting. That cloud signified God's visitation and His abiding with them.

The cloud also signifies God's care for His people and His favor toward them. He appeared to them like a cloud, covering and overshadowing them, in order to care for them. Proverbs 16:15 says that the king's favor is like "a cloud of the latter rain." In His gracious visitation God comes to us like a cloud to care for us and to show favor to us.

In Ezekiel 1:4 the cloud is mentioned in relation to the wind. Together, the wind and the cloud are an indication [of] an important...spiritual transaction between God and us....We also experience a spiritual transaction during times of revival. First, the Holy Spirit touches us and moves us, causing us to turn to the Lord, to see our corruption, and to repent and confess our sins. Then we have the sense that God is like a cloud visiting us, overshadowing us, and covering us. We may sense also that the grace of God is upon us, covering us like a canopy....The blowing of the wind brings the presence of God to us in the form of a heavenly, brooding, overshadowing cloud.

We all need to experience the Lord's presence like a brooding, overshadowing cloud. We should not be content with mere doctrines and teachings. Instead of coming to the Bible seeking more knowledge, we need to seek the Lord Himself. When we come to the Word, we should pray, "Lord, I need the wind and the cloud. Lord, blow upon me as a stormy wind from the north and cover me with the overshadowing cloud. Come to me as the wind and stay with me as the cloud." (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 29-32)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 3

« WEEK 2 —DAY 3 »»

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 24:17 And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like consuming fire on the top of the mountain to the eyes of the children of Israel.

Deut. 4:24 For Jehovah your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Heb. 12:29 For our God is also a consuming fire.

Ezekiel saw that the cloud which overshadowed him was covered with fire flashing continually. This also...corresponds to our spiritual experience. When the stormy wind comes from the Lord and the overshadowing presence of the Lord remains, we have the sense that something within us is shining, searching, and burning. Under such a shining, enlightening, searching, and burning, we may realize that we are wrong in certain things.

The fire seen by Ezekiel signifies God's burning and sanctifying power. Everything that does not match God's holy nature and disposition must be burned away. Only what matches His holiness can pass through His holy fire. This can be confirmed by our spiritual experience. The Holy Spirit comes to convict people regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). Whenever the Holy Spirit touches us and causes us to confess our sins and pray, we will sense the need to be sanctified and to have all the corruption purged out of our being. We will realize that anything that does not match the holiness of God must be burned away....When God visits a person, His holy fire will come to consume the negative things in him. This burning fire also causes us to be enlightened. The more the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in us, the more we will be purified and enlightened. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 32-33)

Today's Reading

If we experience the Lord in this way, there will be no need for others to tell us that we are wrong in certain matters or that our attitude toward a particular brother is wrong. If someone tries to correct us, we might be offended. But even if we would receive a word of correction and then try to improve ourselves, this would not mean anything as far as the inner life is concerned. We need to be under the shining and the searching of the Lord's presence. The more we are under this shining, the more we will be willing to say, "Lord Jesus, burn me! I am not good for anything except to be burned. O Lord, burn away my disposition. Burn away my intentions, my self-aim, my motives, and my goals." This is a genuine experience of the inner life, not a mere teaching.

We all need the blowing of the wind, the overshadowing of the Lord's presence, and the searching and burning of this fire. Our God is a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29)...When He comes, He comes as the stormy wind. When He remains with us, He stays as the cloud. When He searches and burns us, He searches and burns as the consuming fire. No one can experience the Lord as the blowing wind, as the covering cloud, and as the burning, consuming fire without undergoing a real change and transformation. We all need transformation by fire. We all need to be transformed by being burned.

The source of the fire is the blowing wind with the covering cloud. From this we see that the fire does not come to us directly. God comes to us as the blowing wind and stays with us as the covering cloud. Under His covering we are exposed by His shining. As we are under His shining, we should confess our need for His burning and then pray for Him to burn away our self, our old nature, our disposition, our worldliness, and our attitudes, goals, aims, motives, and intentions. We all need to be burned by the Lord in this way. One such burning is better than a thousand teachings.

This fire consumes not only our pride but also our humility, not only our wickedness but also our kindness, not only our hatred but also our love. When we are under the blowing of the wind, the covering of the cloud, and the burning of the fire, we will not feel that we are all right. On the contrary, our "I" will fall apart and be dissolved. Eventually, this fire will burn away everything other than God. Only God can pass through this burning. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 33-34, 39)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 3

« WEEK 2 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:4 And I looked, and there came a storm wind from the north, a great cloud and a fire flashing incessantly; and there was a brightness around it, and from the midst of it there was something like the sight of electrum, from the midst of the fire.

Rev. 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

God's intention is not simply to burn us and turn us into ashes. God is a good God with a good purpose. What is His purpose in blowing upon us as the wind, in covering us as the cloud, and in consuming us as the fire? The answer to this question is that out of the fire appears the glowing electrum. The burning of the divine fire is for the manifestation of the electrum.

The Hebrew word for electrum is very difficult to translate. In his note on Ezekiel 1:4 in his New Translation, J. N. Darby says that the Hebrew word denotes "an unknown substance; some think a mixture of gold and silver"...Electrum is an alloy of gold and silver. Gold signifies the nature of God, and silver signifies redemption....Electrum is not merely gold nor merely silver but gold mixed with silver. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 34)

Today's Reading

Revelation 22:1 speaks of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The One on the throne is not just God and not just the Lamb but the Lamb-God, the redeeming God. In Genesis 1 God was solely God, but in Revelation 22 He is our redeeming God, our Lamb-God. According to Revelation 4:3 God, the One on the throne, "was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance." Jasper, which is dark green, signifies God as the God of glory in His rich life, and sardius, which is red, signifies God as the God of redemption. The fact that the appearance of God on the throne is like a jasper stone and a sardius indicates that God is no longer just God but also our Redeemer. These illustrations from Revelation 22 and 4 help us to understand the significance of the electrum in Ezekiel. Our God is not merely the Divine Being signified by the gold; He is also the redeeming God, signified by the silver. No longer is He just gold—He is electrum, gold mingled with silver.

When we experience the blowing wind, we enjoy the covering cloud and then we pass through the burning, consuming fire. The result is the glowing electrum, something shining, lovely, precious, and pleasant. As the electrum, the Lord Jesus is the One who has redeemed us and who is everything to us. He is our God, our Lamb, our Redeemer, our jasper, and our sardius. If we consider our spiritual experience, we will realize that the One who dwells within us today is the Lamb-God, the One signified by the electrum.

Now we have Him as the treasure in the earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7), and we have thereby become a people of honor and glory. We need to consider how precious and honorable is the Christ who is within us. As the electrum within us, He is the treasure of incomparable worth. This treasure is the issue of the wind, the cloud, and the fire. The more we pass through the wind, the cloud, and the fire, the more the electrum is constituted into our being, making us a people who are filled with the Triune God and who manifest His glory. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 34-35)

[God as the] light needs a lamp, and the Lamb is the lamp of the city (Rev. 21:23c). We need to ask why God, being the light, needs a lamp. Every electrical light needs a holder or a bulb. Without the bulb, our touching of the electricity may electrify and kill us. In like manner, without the Lamb being the lamp, God's shining over us would "kill" all of us. However, the divine light shines through our Redeemer. This light has become so lovable and touchable, and we even walk in this light (1 John 1:7). Without the Lamb's redemption, God's shining over us could only kill us. God as the light, though, has a holder, and this holder is the Redeemer, the Lamb. The Lamb as the lamp expresses the light in a very approachable and lovable way. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 3, "God's New Testament Economy," p. 457)

Further Reading: God's New Testament Economy, ch. 37

« WEEK 2 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...

19 ...That you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

The spiritual history of a normal Christian should be a continual cycle involving the experience of God as the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum. The more we experience the wind, the cloud, and the fire, the more the electrum is constituted into our being, making us a people who are filled with the Triune God and who manifest His glory. The issue of the spiritual transactions involving the blowing wind, the covering cloud, and the purifying fire is the glowing electrum—the radiant expression of the redeeming God. (Ezek. 1:4, footnote 5)

Today's Reading

The spiritual history of every Christian should involve the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum. When we were saved, we experienced the Lord in these four ways, and we should continue to experience Him in this way. In fact, every time we are graced by the Lord, we have spiritual transactions with Him involving the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum. When you wake up in the morning, you may sense that the wind of the Spirit is blowing upon you and that a cloud is overshadowing you. Then as you spend some time to pray, you may sense that a fire is burning within you to consume your corruption, worldliness, and many other negative things. Eventually, you may sense that within you there is something bright, beautiful, and dignified—the glowing electrum. As a result of this experience, you may live the whole day in the enjoyment of the glowing electrum. However, as you live and walk in this corrupted world, you cannot avoid being defiled and contaminated, so at the end of the day or the next morning you may have a further experience of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum....You confess your sins and deal with your filthiness, and following this you once again enjoy the shining of the electrum within you.

Sometimes we need to experience the blowing of a mighty wind, a wind that causes us to have a great turn. Whenever we make such a turn, we receive much grace from the Lord....Being graced by the Lord is a matter of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum. The Holy Spirit blows upon us like a wind from God. This is the beginning of our being graced. Then as we are under the brooding, covering cloud of the Lord's presence, we spontaneously realize how sinful and impure we are....Everything that does not match God's holy and glorious nature will be consumed. Everything that is not of God—everything related to sin, the world, the flesh, and Satan—must be burned away. The only thing that can pass through the consuming fire is the redeeming God as the glowing electrum.

The more you pursue the Lord, the more you will realize that the holy fire burns not only your weak points but also your strong points, including your natural goodness, your natural virtues, and everything in you that you and others admire, appreciate, and hold in high regard. Like Augustine, you may eventually feel that even your confession and tears of repentance need the Lord's cleansing.

The issue of the blowing of the wind, the covering of the cloud, and the burning of the fire is the radiant manifestation of the electrum. As we experience the burning of the consuming fire, God Himself is manifested in us. The more we pass through God's wind, cloud, and fire, the more the Lord is manifested in us in a dignified and glorious way. When He is manifested in such a way, we sense that He alone is precious, lovely, bright, majestic, and glorious. Like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, we see "no one except Jesus Himself alone" (Matt. 17:8). The only one in view, the only one in the scene, is the lovely, precious, glorious Lord Jesus. Then we can do nothing other than bow before Him, worship Him, exalt Him, crown Him, and pour out everything to Him. In this way we gain the Lord, and He gains us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 40-42)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 4

« WEEK 2 —DAY 6 »»

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:1 ...The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

28 Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain....This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah...

Rev. 21:10-11 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God...

We all need to experience more of the spiritual wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the glowing electrum. By passing through this kind of experience, we become the vision of the glory of God. In our experience we have the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum. Then whenever we meet together, we are the vision of the glory of the electrum, having a precious treasure that is shining and glowing.

Genesis 1 begins with a word concerning God, and Ezekiel 1 opens with a glorious vision of God. Those who know God can testify that our spiritual experiences are according to our knowledge of God. Likewise, our service and the church affairs also depend on our knowledge of God. The degree of our knowing God will determine both the degree of our spiritual experience and the situation of the church. Spiritually speaking, everything we have depends on God's being, vision, and manifestation and on our knowing God. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 35-36, 23)

Today's Reading

The visions in the book of Ezekiel begin not with man but with God. The visions, which begin from the north, where God is, show us God in His will, plan, intention, work, action, and relationship with man. These visions reveal what God expects man to be in relation to Him. In addition to [the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum], the visions in chapter 1 include the four living creatures, the high and dreadful wheels, a sky as clear as crystal, God's glorious throne, and the man upon the throne. As we consider God's glorious visions in this chapter, we need to pay careful attention to all these matters.

A great many items in the universe are symbols of spiritual things. For example, the sun symbolizes Christ as our light (Mal. 4:2; Luke 1:78), and food symbolizes Christ as our sustenance (John 6:35). Actually, all the positive things in the universe may be used to portray what Christ is to us....The entire universe came into existence for the purpose of describing Christ. For example, if vines had not been created, the Lord Jesus could not have used a vine to describe Himself (John 15:1)....Even the pasture was created so that the Lord Jesus could use it as an illustration of Himself (John 10:9). Because the universe with the billions of things and persons in it was created for the purpose of describing Christ, He, in revealing Himself, can find in any environment something to serve as an illustration of Himself. The whole universe is a picture of Christ. If we see this, we will realize how rich, profound, unlimited, and unsearchable Christ is. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 23-24)

We all need to enter into the depths of the book of Revelation so that we might realize that whatever we experience, enjoy, and realize of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our experience, enjoyment, and realization of the Triune God. He is revealed to such a great extent, and we must experience and enjoy Him to such an extent. Our enjoyment then becomes His testimony, and this living testimony is the present revelation of Jesus Christ. First, He is revealed, then we enjoy Him and become His testimony, and eventually our testimony becomes His present revelation. He is now revealed in our experience of Him as a testimony to Him. He is revealed as the all-inclusive, excellent, marvelous, mysterious, and wonderful One. We need to experience and enjoy such a Christ in so many details in order that our experience can become not only His testimony but also His present revelation. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 3, "God's New Testament Economy," p. 310)

Further Reading: God's New Testament Economy, ch. 21

<< WEEK 2 —HYMN

Hymns, #1200

There's a stormy wind a-blowing from the north

Experience of God — As the Wind, Cloud, Fire, and Electrum

1200

1. There's a storm - y wind a - blow - ing from the north; Let it blow! Let it
blow! God as our ex - perience will the wind bring forth; Let it blow! Let it
Chorus
blow! (C) Let it blow! the rush-ing might - y wind; Let it blow us in - to
life! Let it blow! the gracious wind of God; Let it blow us in - to Christ!

Chords: F, Gm, C⁷, C/E, Dm, F/C, Gm/B \flat , B \flat /F, F, Dm, Gm, C⁷, F, B \flat /F, F.

2. There's a hov'ring cloud a-following the wind,
Covering us! Covering us!
And the presence of the Lord the cloud does bring,
Covering us! Covering us!

Covering us, God's overshadowing cloud—
God has come to stay with us.
Covering us, the gracious cloud of God—
Strength and comfort glorious!

3. With the cloud continually a fire does flash
Burning us! Burning us!
It exposes sin, the soul life, and the flesh,
Burning us! Burning us!

Let it burn! the jealous flame of God;
Let it burn continually!
Let it burn! this all-consuming flame;
Let it burn us thoroughly!

4. Then from out the fire does the electrum glow,
Shining forth! Shining forth!
The redeeming God does our experience show,
Shining forth! Shining forth!

Let Him shine! This gold and silver One;
Let Him shine for all to see!
'Tis the Lamb-God who has now become
Our enjoyment inwardly.

5. Let the wind, cloud, fire and th' electrum be
Wrought in us, o'er and o'er;
Let this cycle be repeated constantly
More and more, more and more!

Blow and hover, burn and shine forth, Lord,
All our being to possess,
That we all may gain Thee constantly
All Thy likeness to express.

WEEK 3 —OUTLINE

The Four Living Creatures

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:5-6, 10, 26

« DAY 1 »

I. When we experience God as the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the glowing electrum, we become the four living creatures, a corporate entity expressing Christ (Ezek. 1:5-6):

A. In the Bible the number four is related to God's creation and signifies man as God's creature (Isa. 11:12; Jer. 49:36; Rev. 7:1).

B. The number four indicates that we are the people redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (5:9).

C. The four living creatures are regarded as a group; they are counted as a single entity.

II. The more we experience the cycle of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, the more living we become (1:18; John 6:51; cf. Psa. 95:1-2):

A. Through the experience of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, we, who were dead, have been enlivened to become living creatures (John 5:25; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 1:13).

B. If we continue to experience the cycle of the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, we will become living and vibrant in our inner being (1 Pet. 1:23; 2:4-5).

C. There is a twofold proof by which we can know that we are living creatures:

1. The inward proof is the sense of life in our regenerated spirit (Rom. 8:6).

2. The outward proof is that we engage in a number of spiritual activities:

a. The first of these activities is prayer (1 Thes. 5:17; Col. 4:2; cf. Lam. 3:55-56).

b. Other activities that prove that we are living creatures include reading the Bible (Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:15, 140), functioning in the meetings (1 Cor. 14:26, 31), serving God (1 Thes. 1:9; Rom. 1:9), and preaching the gospel (1:1; 1 Cor. 9:23).

3. Every time we meet the Lord as the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, our inner being will be made alive, and we will become vital believers—those who are living and active (Dan. 11:32b).

« DAY 2 »

III. The four living creatures bear the appearance of a man and are the corporate expression of the man on the throne (Ezek. 1:5, 26):

- A. The fact that the four living creatures bear the likeness of a man and that God on the throne also bears the appearance of a man indicates that God's central thought and His arrangement are related to man (Gen. 1:26).
- B. We need to have a proper appreciation of the Lord's humanity, and we need to see how marvelous it is that we are men.
- C. In the Bible there are actually only four men: the first man, the second man, the new man, and the man-child; we were the first man; Christ is called the second man (1 Cor. 15:47); we have become the new man by regeneration (Eph. 2:15); and now there is the prospect that we may become the man-child (Rev. 12:5).
- D. The Christ whom the church must express is the man on the throne (3:21; cf. Acts 7:56).
- E. It is man who fulfills God's plan, it is man who expresses God, it is man who defeats the enemy, and it is man who brings the kingdom of God into the human race; God needs a man.

« DAY 3 »

F. In Ezekiel 1 there are three crucial matters concerning the four living creatures' bearing the appearance of a man:

- 1. The living creatures are the means for God to manifest His glory; apart from their bearing the appearance of a man, God's glory cannot be manifested (v. 28).
- 2. The living creatures are the means for God to move on the earth; God's move depends on them (vv. 12-21).
- 3. The living creatures are the means for God to administrate on the throne (v. 26):
 - a. God's throne, the center of His administration, dominates everything on earth and everything recorded in Ezekiel (Rev. 4:2, 6).
 - b. Because the living creatures bear the appearance of a man, there is the administration of God's throne (Jer. 17:12).
 - c. Man is the means of God's manifestation, man is the means of God's move, and man is the means of God's administration.

IV. The four living creatures have four faces (Ezek. 1:6a, 10):

- A. The face of a man indicates that the living creatures live in a proper humanity, the humanity of Jesus (v. 10a):

« DAY 4 »

- 1.The glorious beauty of the Lord Jesus is manifested in His humanity (cf. Exo. 28:2; Rom. 13:14).
- 2.The Lord's salvation is to make us proper human beings.
- 3.The more spiritual we become, the more normal, ordinary, and human we will be (Col. 3:4, 10-11).
- 4.We need to be human not by our natural humanity but by the humanity of Jesus; this is to be "Jesusly human."
- 5.In the Epistles we are taught by the apostles to be proper human beings, in particular how to be proper husbands, wives, and parents (Eph. 5:22—6:9; Col. 3:18—4:1).

« DAY 5 »

B.The face of a lion (Ezek. 1:10b):

- 1.In the Bible a lion signifies boldness, vigor, strength, victory, and reigning (Prov. 28:1; Gen. 49:9).
- 2.If toward sin, the world, and Satan we are bold like lions, God will be able to establish His reign through us (Rev. 5:5; Rom. 5:17).

C.The face of an ox (Ezek. 1:10c):

- 1.An ox signifies one who is willing to labor, to bear the burden, and to sacrifice himself (1 Cor. 15:10, 58; Acts 20:24; Phil. 2:30).
- 2.We all need to express the reality of serving others, of bearing responsibility, and of sacrificing our life (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18; Rom. 12:1).

« DAY 6 »

D. The face of an eagle (Ezek. 1:10d):

- 1.In the Bible an eagle signifies the powerful, buoyant, transcendent God (Exo. 19:4).
- 2.As believers in Christ, we have God's life within us; this life is transcendent and causes us to have an expression of buoyancy and transcendence (Isa. 40:31; John 6:15; Phil. 4:12-13):
 - a.We have the divine and almighty capacity to express God in every human situation.
 - b.We are indestructible, unconquerable, and invincible for the carrying out of God's economy (Rom. 8:37).
- 3.We need to be like an eagle, not allowing anything to hold us, to suppress

us, or to depress us; this means that we should be able to overcome both persecution and praise (cf. John 6:15; Phil. 4:12-13).

V. The four living creatures are a corporate, fourfold expression of Christ, living out the life of Christ in a corporate way (Ezek. 1:10):

- A. The four living creatures with their four faces signify a coordinated, corporate entity, the corporate Christ as the corporate expression of God among human beings (1 Cor. 12:12 and footnote 2).
- B. The four faces of the living creatures correspond to the four Gospels: Matthew—Christ as a lion, the King of God's kingdom; Mark—Christ as an ox, the Servant of God; Luke—Christ as a man, the Man-Savior; John—Christ as an eagle, the very God.
- C. The four living creatures are a corporate entity expressing Christ in a complete way, exactly as He was in His living on earth.

« WEEK 3 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5-6 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings.

John 5:25 Truly, truly, I say to you, An hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

We need to pay attention to the first word in Ezekiel 1:5a, and. Not only does electrum come out of the fire; something else also comes out. The wind brings in the cloud; the cloud enfolds the fire; and the fire produces the electrum plus something else—the four living creatures. When we experience God as the blowing wind, the overshadowing cloud, the burning fire, and the electrum, we become the four living creatures. We were dead, but by experiencing God in this way we become something living. The Lord Jesus said that “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God” and that “those who hear will live” (John 5:25). Paul said that we were dead but God has made us alive (Eph. 2:5). The more we have the cycle of the wind, cloud, fire, and electrum, the more living we become. Every time we are blown upon by God and overshadowed and consumed and burned by Him, we are enlivened. As a result we become lively and vibrant. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 43-44)

Today's Reading

The word living in Hebrew has the same root as the word for life in Genesis 2:9, which speaks of the tree of life. How can we, who are creatures, become the living creatures? We become living creatures by experiencing God as the tree of life. This life, the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God, is the real life. Only by having this real life can we become a living creature. Whenever we experience God as the tree of life, we sense that we have something living within us. We have a living element, a living factor, within us. This living element, or factor, will always make us living.

How can we prove that we are no longer dead but have become living creatures? There is a twofold proof, that is, an inward proof and an outward proof. The inward proof that we are living creatures is that we now have a feeling, or sense, of life. Living persons have feelings....A person who is spiritually living will have a deep feeling whenever he lives in a way that does not glorify God or that is not pleasing to Him. If our inner feeling, the inner sense of life, is sensitive, deep, and fresh, this is a proof that inwardly we are living and that we are therefore a living creature.

The second proof is outward and is related to our activities. A dead person is inactive, but a living person is very active....A Christian who is living, that is, who is a living creature, will engage in a number of activities. The first of these activities is prayer. Just as we cannot live physically without breathing, so we cannot live spiritually without praying. Prayer is a Christian's spiritual breathing, and it is often spontaneous....Other activities that prove that we are living creatures include reading the Bible, functioning in the meetings, serving God, and preaching the gospel.

It is significant that Ezekiel 1:5 speaks of four living creatures. Many verses in the Bible indicate that the number four is related to God's creation and signifies man as God's creature (Isa. 11:12; Jer. 49:36; Rev. 7:1). Revelation 5:9 says that the Lord has redeemed us out of four sources: out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Furthermore, Revelation 21 tells us that the New Jerusalem has four sides—the east, the north, the south, and the west—and that each of the four sides has three gates. This means that from every direction of the earth we can enter the city. Therefore, the number four symbolizes that we are the people redeemed from many tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations. In the eyes of God we are the four living creatures.

The four living creatures are reckoned not as individuals but as a group. All of them are counted as one entity. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 44-47)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.

26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

The main point of Ezekiel 1:5 is that the four living creatures bear the appearance of a man. Verse 26 says that “upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.” Man is a great word in the Bible. God’s intention is with man, God’s thought is focused on man, and God’s heart is set upon man. God’s desire is to gain man. The fact that four living creatures bear the appearance of a man and that God on the throne also bears the appearance of a man indicates that God’s central thought and His arrangement are related to man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 47)

Today’s Reading

In our reading of the four Gospels we may be under the influence of a religious concept that places undue emphasis upon Christ’s divinity. As a result, we may not have the proper appreciation of the Lord’s humanity. When we read in the Gospels how the Lord Jesus manifested His divinity by performing miracles, we may praise the Lord for the power of His divinity. However, when we read in John 13 about how the Lord washed the feet of His disciples, we may not offer any praise. Likewise, when we read about the miracle of the Lord’s feeding more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, we may feel that this was something great, but we may have no appreciation for His ordering the people to sit down in groups or for His directing the disciples to gather the broken pieces left over so that nothing would be lost. Such things may make no impression on us. If we know how to read the Gospels in a proper way, we will realize that the glorious beauty of the Lord Jesus is manifested in His humanity. He manifested His glorious beauty not through His divine dignity but through His humanity with its lowliness and tenderness. At the Lord’s table meeting, we need to praise the Lord for His humanity....We need to see how glorious and how marvelous it is that we are men.

God wants to be like us. He even became a man in order to declare God (John 1:18), and today in the heavens the Lord Jesus, who is God, is still a man. There is a man on the throne (Acts 7:56).

The Bible clearly reveals that man is the means for God to manifest Himself. God cannot be manifested without man. Man was created in God’s image in order to be God’s expression. God is the center of the universe, but He needs an expression, and this expression is through man. Without man, God has no expression....God needs a corporate man to express Him. You should never despise the fact that you are a man.

In the Bible there are actually only four men: the first man, the second man, the new man, and the man-child. We were the first man; Christ is called the second man (1 Cor. 15:47); we have become the new man by regeneration; and now there is the prospect that we may become the man-child.

We may talk about the church as the expression of Christ, but we may not realize what the expression of Christ is. The Christ whom the church must express is the man upon the throne. If we would express Christ, we need to realize Christ today is still a man. We do not express merely God; we express God in a man. The church is the expression of Christ. This means that the church is an expression not merely of God but also of a man.

Ezekiel 1:26 shows us that the Lord today is a man on the throne. God needs a man, and eventually He became a man. We as the living creatures express Him as a man. He is the man on the throne, and we also bear the appearance of a man. It is man who fulfills God’s plan, it is man who expresses God, it is man who defeats the enemy, and it is man who brings the kingdom of God into the human race. God needs a man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 47-49)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:21 Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still; and whenever those were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up alongside them; for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

28 Like the appearance of the rainbow,...such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah...

The religious teachings in Christianity encourage us either to be like an angel or to be like God. However, the divine revelation unveils that God's desire is to have a man. We need to remember that the subtle one tempted the first man by telling him that if he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would be like God (Gen. 3:5). From that day the concept of being like God has been in our blood. Every fallen human being has the concept of wanting to be like God. Certain devilish teachings encourage people to be something other than man. But in His redemption and salvation God has no intention of making anything other than man. God's redemption and God's salvation are to bring us back to the beginning and to recover us to being a proper man. We are the living creatures and we have God's life within us, yet we bear the appearance of a man. We should not try to be like an angel. Instead, in whatever we do, in whatever we say, and in whatever we express, we should be a man. This is what God needs today. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 49-50)

Today's Reading

The vision in Ezekiel 1 reveals three crucial matters concerning the four living creatures' bearing the appearance of a man. First, God's glory is manifested upon them. The manifestation of God's glory depends upon their having the appearance of a man. Where they are, there God's glory is. God's glory is not separate from them, and apart from them God's glory cannot be manifested. Second, these living creatures are the means of God's move. God's move depends on them. When they move, God will move, for His move is with them. Third, the four living creatures, who bear the appearance of a man, are the means of God's administration. Ezekiel 1 reveals that God is sitting on the throne. God's throne dominates everything on earth and everything recorded in this book. This throne, therefore, is the center of God's administration. However, the center of God's administration depends on the four living creatures having the appearance of a man. Because of this, there is the administration of God's throne. If we put these three things together, we will see that man is the means of God's manifestation, that man is the means of God's move, and that man is the means of God's administration. In God's eyes and in God's hands, man has such an important position.

We all need to realize that God's desire is to gain man. God uses the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum to enliven us in order to gain man as the means of His manifestation, move, and administration. Since man is so important to God, it is crucial for us to be a man and to bear the appearance of a man. We need to be a man for God's manifestation, for God's move, and for God's administration. For this we need to be the living creatures enlivened by experiencing the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum.

Each of the four living creatures has four faces. If we saw someone with four faces, we would be frightened, yet this is exactly what we should be. We all need to have four faces.

The first face is the face of a man. We are men, and because we are men, we should look like men. We were created as men, but we were corrupted, poisoned, and damaged by the fall. Therefore, we need the Lord's redemption. Through the Lord's redemption we are brought back to the proper humanity. Actually, the humanity we have now is not ours but His, for we have the humanity of Jesus. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 50-51)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

10-11 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where...Christ is all and in all.

The Lord's salvation is to make us proper men. If you are a husband, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper husband. If you are a wife, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper wife. If you are a parent, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper parent. If you are a child, the Lord's salvation is to make you a proper child. The Lord's salvation is to make us proper human beings. Thus, we all should bear the face of a man. However, some Christians, especially certain sisters, do not seem to be human beings. Rather, they are so "spiritual" that it seems that they have become strange creatures—half human, half angel. We need the face of a man. We should not prefer to be something else, and we should not pretend to be something else. We should just be what we are—a man. Instead of trying to be something other than a human being, we should simply be human. However, we should be human not by our natural humanity but by the humanity of the Lord Jesus. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 51)

Today's Reading

If we read the four Gospels again, we will see that Jesus was a person with a proper humanity. Many who read the Gospels only pay attention to the miracles worked out by the Lord in His divinity; they do not pay adequate attention to the things worked out by the Lord's humanity. For example, John 4 relates how the Lord Jesus was traveling with His disciples to a city in Samaria. He was tired and thirsty, and He asked His disciples to go into the city to buy something to eat. After they went away to buy food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well near which the Lord Jesus was sitting. Although He was the Almighty God, in this situation He conducted Himself just like an ordinary man, without any indication or hint that He was God. When He asked the woman for water, He gave no indication that He was anything more than a man. The woman questioned Him, saying, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman?" (v. 9). He responded to her question in a very human way. The four Gospels record many similar stories which show us how the Lord Jesus behaved Himself like a normal man, bearing the face of a man. Unlike certain religious people today who dress in a way that is very strange, the Lord Jesus did not dress in a peculiar manner. In His clothing He was not strange or different from others. On the contrary, His living was that of an ordinary human being. His living was ordinary to such an extent that some would say, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55). In the eyes of the people, the Lord Jesus was the son of an ordinary carpenter. Far from being strange, He was an ordinary man and He bore the face of a man. Today, we too need to bear the face of man.

Some believers have the thought that once they begin to pursue the Lord, they should be special or different from others. We need to realize, therefore, that we should be ordinary, that is, we should be the same as common, ordinary human beings. Although we pray, read the Bible, attend the meetings, and serve God, our appearance is still the appearance of a man, and our face is the face of a man. In our dress we are proper, but we are ordinary, not peculiar or eccentric. Yes, we experience the Lord as the wind, the cloud, the fire, and the electrum, but the issue of this experience is that we bear the face of a man. As living creatures, we are not angels but are very human. In fact, the more spiritual we become, the more normal and human we will be. The more we have of Christ as our life (Col. 3:4), the more we will bear the face of a man. In the Epistles we are taught by the apostles to be proper human beings, in particular how to be proper husbands, wives, and parents (Eph. 5:22—6:9; Col. 3:18—4:1). God's salvation causes us to be proper men for His manifestation, move, and administration. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 51-52)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and the four of them had the face of a lion on the right side, and the four of them had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four of them had the face of an eagle.

Rev. 5:5 ...Do not weep; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals.

We also need to bear the face of a lion. In the Bible a lion signifies boldness, vigor, strength, and victory. In our Christian life we first need to be a man. Wherever we may be—at our school, in our office, or among our neighbors—we should be a man. But we should also be a lion. If in the office you are a proper man, others will be drawn to you. However, those who are drawn to you may be “germs” that can corrupt you. Because they like you, they may invite you to participate with them in a certain kind of worldly amusement. At such a time you should behave not like a man but like a lion. This means that toward anything sinful or worldly, we must be as bold as a lion. All those who work in your office should know that if they talk to you about worldly things, you will behave like a lion. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 53)

Today's Reading

People often consider that the Lord Jesus was gentle and mild. However, at least on certain occasions, He was not at all gentle. For example, when He went into the temple and found “those selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers sitting there,” He became angry and made a whip out of cords and “drove them all out of the temple, as well as the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the money of the moneychangers and overturned their tables” (John 2:14-15). Furthermore, in Matthew 23 He severely rebuked the religionists, saying to them, “Serpents! Brood of vipers!” (v. 33). In these situations He surely was as bold as a lion. In Revelation 5:5 He is even called “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” There are times when we also need to have the face of a lion.

In the Bible a lion signifies not only boldness, vigor, strength, and victory but also reigning. The lion is the king of the animals. We, who have become living creatures through regeneration, should not only be men to manifest God but also lions to reign for God. If toward sin, the world, and Satan we are strong and bold like lions, God will be able to establish His reign through us.

We need not only the face of a man and the face of a lion but also the face of an ox. The face of a lion is balanced by the face of an ox. If in your office you have the face of a lion, that alone will not convince others. You need to be balanced by having the face of an ox. An ox is one who is willing to bear the burden, to do the work, and even to sacrifice himself. We all need to have such an appearance and to express such a reality of serving others, bearing the burden, caring for the responsibility, and even sacrificing our life. If as you are working in an office you are a proper man, you are as bold as a lion, and you are also faithful in bearing responsibility, you will make a good impression on others. In order to make such an impression, you need to behave not only like a man and like a lion but also like a serving, suffering ox. When the office needs to be cleaned, you should take the lead to clean, doing more than the other employees. In this way you will show your colleagues that you are willing to sacrifice, to help others, and to serve them. Then you will have the reality of the face of an ox. When others see you with the face of a man, the face of a lion, and the face of an ox, they will say, “This is a real Christian.”

As the four living creatures we are not only the unique expression of Christ but also...the complete expression of Christ. We express Christ in every direction, toward every side. We are the four living creatures expressing Christ in an adequate and complete way. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 53-54, 47)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

« WEEK 3 —DAY 6 »»

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 19:4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Isa. 40:31 Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and will not become weary; they will walk and will not faint.

Furthermore, we also need, at the rear, a hidden face—the face of an eagle [Ezek. 1:10]. After God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness, He said to them, “I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself” (Exo. 19:4). This indicates that in the Bible an eagle signifies the powerful, transcendent God. God is transcendent, buoyant, and powerful. Nothing can suppress Him, oppress Him, or depress Him. The more you try to suppress Him, the more buoyant and transcendent He becomes. A Christian has God's life within him, and this life is transcendent, causing him to have an expression of buoyancy and transcendence. This is the significance of the face of an eagle. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 54)

Today's Reading

We need to be like an eagle, not allowing anything to hold us, to suppress us, or to depress us. This means that we should be able to overcome both persecution and praise. Sometimes it is more difficult to overcome praise than it is to overcome persecution. Some can overcome persecution, but they are unable to overcome people's praise. This should not be the case with us. Whether we are persecuted or praised, we need to be able to fly away on eagles' wings. We should be buoyant and transcendent. This is exactly how the Lord Jesus was in John when the people tried to make Him king after He fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. Concerning this John 6:15 says, “Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him King, withdrew again to the mountain, Himself alone.” He could not be held because He had the power of an eagle and was therefore transcendent.

A Christian should not be held by anything. However, it is possible for us to be held by many different things. One believer may be held by poverty, and another may be held by riches. If we would be a proper Christian, we should be held neither by poverty nor by riches. Like Paul, we should be able to say, “I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me” (Phil. 4:12-13). Paul's word reveals that he had the wings of an eagle. He bore the appearance of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and also of an eagle.

These four faces—the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle—portray the life of Christ. These four faces correspond to the four Gospels, which may be regarded as four biographies of the Lord Jesus, with each presenting a certain aspect of Christ. Luke shows Him as a man, Matthew shows Him as a lion, Mark shows Him as an ox, and John shows Him as an eagle. This fourfold life is the life of Christ.

The four living creatures are a corporate expression of Christ. They express Christ in four aspects—as a man, as a lion, as an ox, and as an eagle. This is the expression of the life of Christ in a corporate way. As Christians, we should be the living creatures, those who are a corporate entity to express Christ exactly as He was on earth. When He was on earth, He lived in the four aspects of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Today we should be the corporate expression of such a Christ. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 54-56)

The church is built with the divine life in Christ, a life that is indestructible, unconquerable (Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24), and able to withstand decline into death originating from any source. Hence, the church is the firm foundation of God that stands forever against any heresy. (2 Tim. 2:19, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 5

<< WEEK 3 —HYMN

Hymns, #1201

From the north where God is dwelling Experience of God — As the Wind, Cloud, Fire, and Electrum

1201

1. From the north where God is dwell - ing Comes a rush - ing, storm - y
gale. Now the might - y Spir - it blow - ing All our be - ing does as -
sail. (C) We are stirred to our foun - da - tions— How this wind a - wak - ens
us! Thus we're o - pen for God's deal - ings, And the cloud descends on us.

2. With the cloud we have His presence

Sweetly hov'ring over us;
So enveloped by His nearness;
In the Lord we put our trust.
But the cloud brings with it fire
To consume our selfish lusts;
That as ashes something higher
May be added into us.

3. Then from out the flashing fire

Comes th' electrum glowing bright.
God as gold and man as silver
Now are mingled. What a sight!
This bright metal, O Lord Jesus,
Is Thyself, Lamb-God sublime.
O Lord, work Thyself within us
Till th' electrum in us shines.

4. By our passing through this cycle,

Living creatures we become
To express the life of Jesus;
He with whom we've been made one.
We express Him as a human,
As a man so good and fine;
Balanced, normal, never striving;
Fully human, yet divine.

5. We express Him as a lion

Conquering every enemy;
As an ox obedient, lowly,
Faithful in His ministry.
We express Him as an eagle,
So transcendent, soaring high;
Never held by fear or flatter,
He above it all does fly.

6. Hallelujah! What a figure

Of the way God deals with us!
From the wind, cloud, fire, electrum,
To the creatures glorious:
As the man, the ox and lion,
As the eagle—all the four
Will be our complete expression
As we eat Him more and more.

WEEK 4 —OUTLINE

The Coordination of the Four Living Creatures

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:9, 11-14; Rom. 12:4-5

<< DAY 1 >>

- I. The central point in Ezekiel 1 is the revelation that God needs a group of living creatures who can coordinate together as one corporate entity, the corporate Christ, for His expression, move, and administration; coordination is the key to understanding the vision in Ezekiel 1 (vv. 5, 10, 12, 20, 26).
- II. The coordination of the four living creatures is not in themselves but in God and by the divine power, the divine strength, and the divine grace, because the eagle's wings are the means by which they are coordinated and move as one (vv. 9, 11; Exo. 19:4; Isa. 40:31; 2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:10):
 - A. God Himself is the coordinating factor that enables all the parts of the divine building to be one (Exo. 26:29-30; cf. 1 John 4:8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Cor. 12:31; 13:5, 7).
 - B. Whatever we are in ourselves, have in ourselves, and do in ourselves results not in coordination but in division and separation (cf. Phil. 3:3; Rom. 8:16).
 - C. The wings of an eagle are not only for moving but also for protection; whatever we do and whatever we are must be by the grace of the Lord and the power of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:7).
 - D. At the same time, we are under the overshadowing, the covering, of the Lord's grace and the Lord's power (Psa. 17:8; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4; 2 Cor. 12:9b).
 - E. The living creatures look like a man (Ezek. 1:5), but they move like an eagle:
 - 1. This indicates that we must always express ourselves like a normal man.
 - 2. However, the moving and overshadowing wings should give others an impression of the Divine Being, an impression that we have God with us as our power and protection.

<< DAY 2 >>

- III. Ezekiel 1:9 and 11b-12 present a beautiful picture of the coordination that we need in the church life:
 - A. Each of the living creatures faces one direction (respectively facing north, south, east, and west), and two of their wings spread out and touch the adjacent creatures' wings, forming a square.

- B.No matter in which direction the living creatures are moving, there is no need for any of them to turn; one simply goes straight forward; one returns, moving backward; and the other sides move sideways (v. 9).
- C.This is a beautiful picture of the coordination in the church as the Body of Christ, in which each member has his particular position and function, or ministry (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:14-30; Eph. 4:7-16; 2 Tim. 4:5; Col. 4:17).
- D. When one member functions, he moves “straight forward” to fulfill his function, and the other members accommodate him by moving in the same direction, some moving “backward” and others moving “sideways,” doing everything through the cross and by the Spirit to dispense Christ into others for the sake of His Body (Ezek. 1:9, 11b-12; 1 Cor. 12:14-30).

« DAY 3 »

- E.In the church service we all need to learn not only how to walk straight forward but also how to walk backward and sideways:
- 1.In coordination there is no freedom or convenience; coordination keeps us from making turns (cf. Eph. 3:18).
 - 2.Before doing anything, we need to stop to fellowship and coordinate with those who serve with us.
 - 3.Fellowship blends us, mingles us, adjusts us, tempers us, harmonizes us, limits us, protects us, supplies us, and blesses us; the Body is in the fellowship (cf. 4:4; 2 Cor. 13:14).
- F.If brothers with different functions do not know to coordinate, they will compete and even strive against each other, which could result in division (cf. Phil. 1:17; 2:2; Gal. 5:25-26):
- 1.When a brother who is burdened for the gospel is functioning, moving straight forward, the brother who is burdened for shepherding should learn to walk backward; the other saints should follow these two, walking sideways.
 - 2.To walk backward and sideways is to say Amen to another’s ministry, function, and burden (Rom. 12:4; cf. 1 Cor. 14:29-31).
 - 3.If we care only for our particular service and do not have these four kinds of walk, eventually we will become a problem in the church (cf. 3 John 9).
 - 4.The one who is walking straight forward has the responsibility of following the Spirit (Ezek. 1:12; cf. Acts 2:14; 16:6-10).
- G.We should apply this matter of coordination not only in a particular local church but also among the churches; this means that we are followers of the churches (1 Thes. 2:14).

« DAY 4 »

IV. The result of the coordination of the living creatures is that they become burning coals and burning torches; the more we coordinate together, the more we burn one another (Ezek. 1:13):

A. The burning of the coals does at least three things:

1. Anything that does not correspond to God and to the nature of God will be burned out by the sanctifying and purifying fire of the burning coals, and only what is of God will remain.
2. The burning in the coordination makes us fervent, intensely hot (Rev. 4:5; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; Rev. 3:15-16).
3. The burning in the coordination produces the power and impact of the church (Acts 1:14).

B. The coals are for burning, and the torches are for enlightening (Ezek. 1:13):

1. The sanctifying fire becomes the sanctifying light:

- a. The areas in which we have been burned by the sanctifying fire spontaneously become the areas in which we are enlightened and can enlighten others (cf. Isa. 6:1, 5-8).
- b. In the proper church life there should be nothing of darkness among the brothers and sisters; all should be thoroughly enlightened.

« DAY 5 »

2. The fire is not static but always moving (Heb. 12:29):

- a. There is fire with the living creatures, because in their fellowship they allow God to move freely among them.
- b. The appearance of the living creatures being like burning fire indicates that they have the appearance of the sanctifying God (Ezek. 1:26-27).
3. The fire being bright indicates that in their coordination the living creatures manifest a glorious and majestic condition (v. 13).
4. Whereas the brightness is usual, the flashing of lightning is special, indicating that at special times there may be a special light that flashes suddenly and causes others to be astonished (cf. Matt. 24:27).
5. The living creatures run because they have the power and the impact (Ezek. 1:14).

« DAY 6 »

V. In order to coordinate with others, we need to deny our self,

experiencing the dealing of the cross, and live and act by God's grace and God's power, signified by the eagle's wings (vv. 9, 11; Isa. 40:31):

- A. We must not act or do anything to express our self; rather, we must do things in the Father's life with the Father's nature to express the Father; this is glory, and it is in this glory that we all are one (John 17:22-24).
- B. In order to coordinate with others, we need to take the forgiving Lord as our forgiving life to forgive others and seek to be forgiven, letting the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts (Col. 3:12-15).
- C. In order to coordinate with others, we need to deal with the idols in our heart, counting all things as loss on account of Christ and counting them as refuse that we may gain Christ (Ezek. 14:3-5; Phil. 3:7-8, 12-14).
- D. If we abide in God, rely on God, dwell in God, and express God, we can coordinate together in God (John 15:5, 7; 8:31; Psa. 90:1; 26:1; 31:20; 91:1, 9, 14; Phil. 1:20; 1 Cor. 10:31).

VI. The living creatures follow the Spirit, indicating that in order to coordinate with others in the Body of Christ, we need to walk by the Spirit and according to the spirit (Ezek. 1:12; Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:4):

- A. Our spirit is universally spacious; God dwells in our spirit, and our spirit is today's Jerusalem (Eph. 2:22; Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9):
 - 1. When the Bible speaks of "your spirit," it includes the spirits of all the saints (Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17).
 - 2. "The words 'our spirit' [in Romans 8:16] include Paul's spirit, Martin Luther's spirit, John Wesley's spirit, Brother Nee's spirit, your spirit, and my spirit" (Life-study of Ephesians, p. 213).
- B. The book of Ephesians reveals that we need to be in the mingled spirit to be in the blending for the reality of the Body of Christ (1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18; cf. Lev. 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:24).

VII. In order to coordinate with others, we need to be one with the coordinating Triune God:

- A. The move of the Divine Trinity with the divine coordination in Matthew 12:28 is an excellent and beautiful example for us to follow; this is a good pattern that our Head has set up for our coordination as members of His Body:
 - 1. The way the Lord cast out demons, by another One and for another One, shows that He did not act individualistically but with humility and selflessness.
 - 2. The Son as the center of the Divine Trinity was altogether not by Himself, for Himself, or to Himself; whatever He did was by the Spirit of God and for the kingdom of God the Father.
 - 3. This shows us the harmony, beauty, and excellency in the Divine Trinity.

4. Today in the church life the Body of Christ has not been built up adequately because of the shortage of the proper coordination.
 5. We may do something according to the will of God, but what we do should not be by ourselves but by some others; furthermore, what we do should not be for ourselves but for the interest, the right, of God on this earth.
- B. Every day we need to move out of ourselves and into the coinhering and coordinating Triune God (2 Thes. 3:5; Jude 19-21; John 17:17).

« WEEK 4 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.

11 ...And their wings were spread out upward; two wings of each were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

The four living creatures with their four faces signify a coordinated, corporate entity, the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12).

First, these living creatures are for God's expression....Second, the living creatures are for God's move. As they coordinate together, they are full of burning, shining, and enlightening, and the great and high wheel, which is for God's move, follows them. This one entity composed of four living creatures is both for God's expression and His move....Third, the living creatures are for God's administration....The throne [over their heads (Ezek. 1:26)] is for God's ruling, God's administration. When God has His expression, move, and administration, He can manifest Himself in His glory and complete His eternal purpose and plan.

Coordination is the key to understanding the vision in Ezekiel 1....May we all see this and may the Lord bring us all into a coordination with many other living creatures for the sake of the corporate expression of Christ, God's move, and God's administration. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 79-80, 90)

Today's Reading

[Ezekiel 1:11b] indicates that the four living creatures were arranged not in a line but in a square. We have pointed out that in the Bible the wings of an eagle signify the grace and power of God. If the four living creatures were not joined together by the wings to form a square, they could not be coordinated. This indicates that the coordination of the living creatures is in the Lord and by the grace of God.

Those who can coordinate are those who deny themselves, reject themselves, regard themselves as nothing, and trust in God's grace, power, and work in everything and for everything. These ones can easily coordinate with others. Actually, there is no need for them to endeavor to coordinate; they coordinate spontaneously and effortlessly because they are in God, not in themselves.

[In Ezekiel 1:11b] we see that two of their wings are for moving, and this moving is in coordination. By two of their wings they are joined to one another, and in this way they are coordinated....The living creatures use the other two wings to cover themselves.

In the Old Testament the eagle's wings signify the divine power, the divine strength, and the divine supply. This indicates that the coordination of the living creatures is not in themselves. In themselves they do not have the ability to be coordinated. Their coordination is in the divine power, in the divine strength, and in the divine supply because the eagle's wings are the means for them to be coordinated with one another. Thus, their coordination does not depend on themselves; it does not depend on what they are or on what they can do. Their coordination depends on the eagle's wings. The eagle's wings are the means by which they are coordinated and move as one. God Himself is the power and strength, and it is by this divine power and strength that they are coordinated.

[In the same principle], the overlaying gold [in the tabernacle (Exo. 26:29-30)] signifies the divine nature and indicates that God Himself is the coordinating factor that enables all the parts of the divine building to be one.

In themselves the living creatures are separate and are individuals, but with the eagle's wings they are coordinated as one body. This indicates that the coordination among us Christians is not something of ourselves. What we have in ourselves does not coordinate—it divides. Whatever we are in ourselves, whatever we have in ourselves, and whatever we do in ourselves result not in coordination but in division and separation. However, we have the eagle's wings, and with the eagle's wings we can be one and we can be coordinated. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 86, 85, 67-68)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 8

« WEEK 4 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:9 Their wings were joined one to another; they did not turn as they went; each went straight forward.

11 And thus their faces were. And their wings were spread out upward; two wings of each were joined one to another; and two covered their bodies.

12 And each went straight forward; wherever the Spirit was to go, they went; they did not turn as they went.

We need to see how the four living creatures are coordinated. Each of the living creatures faces one direction, respectively facing north, south, east, and west. As they face these four directions, two of their wings spread out and touch the adjacent creatures' wings, forming a square.

[In Ezekiel 1:12] every one of the living creatures goes straight forward. They do not turn, but some return, that is, move backward. For instance, while one of the living creatures is moving toward the north, the living creature facing the south must return, moving backward. Thus, one goes straight forward while the opposite creature moves backward. At the same time, the other two living creatures must move sideways. One moves sideways to the left, and the other moves sideways to the right. No matter in which direction the living creatures are moving, there is no need for any one of them to turn. One simply goes straight forward; one returns, moving backward; and the other sides move sideways. This is a beautiful picture of the coordination that we need in the church life. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 68-69)

Today's Reading

Certain brothers and sisters cannot tolerate being coordinated together. Instead, they prefer to be separated and to do things on their own. As long as they are separated, there is no suffering. Once they are coordinated, there is a kind of suffering, because in coordination there is no freedom or convenience.

Coordination keeps us from making turns. If one is moving by himself, he may first move to the north and then turn and move to the east. Later he may turn again to move to the south and eventually turn once more and move to the west. He moves in many directions by making many turns. In the Lord's ministry, on the contrary, there is no such turning. Instead, one moves straight forward, and those who coordinate with him move either backward or sideways.

In the church service,...everyone has his function and position. He can simply go straight forward in his function and position. If there is the need to move in another direction, others can take care of that. There is no need for anyone to turn.

In the church life we all need to learn not only how to walk straight forward but also how to walk backward (that is, to return) and to walk sideways. Although this may seem quite awkward, we all need to learn this lesson. Otherwise, we cannot be coordinated.

One problem is that certain brothers and sisters either want to do everything or do nothing at all. Those who want to do everything want to be able to move in every direction.

When the living creatures move, they go straight forward; they do not make any turns. If one living creature takes the lead to move straight forward toward the east, the other living creatures also move in this direction. This indicates that everyone functions properly in coordination. In the church life today, every member has his own function (1 Cor. 12:14-30) and moves in a straightforward direction to fulfill his function, without turning to do something else....Only one living creature at a time can move forward. However, in moving with him, the others do not turn; rather, they walk backward or sideways. Regardless of the direction in which the living creatures move, one moves forward, one moves backward, and the others move sideways. Thus, those who move backward and sideways accommodate the one who moves forward. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 69-70, 88)

Whatever we do should be through the cross by the Spirit to dispense Christ to others for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ. (The Divine and Mystical Realm, p. 84)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 7

« WEEK 4 —DAY 3 »»

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 12:24 ...But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked.

Ezek. 1:12 And each went straight forward; wherever the Spirit was to go, they went; they did not turn as they went.

God has blended..., adjusted..., harmonized..., tempered..., and mingled the Body. The Greek word for blended [in 1 Corinthians 12:24] implies the losing of distinctions....Whatever we do should be by the Spirit to dispense Christ. Also, what we do should not be for our interest and according to our taste but for the church.

When a co-worker does anything, he should fellowship with the other co-workers. An elder should fellowship with the other elders. Fellowship tempers us; fellowship adjusts us; fellowship harmonizes us; and fellowship mingles us....Fellowship requires us to stop when we are about to do something. In our coordination in the church life, in the Lord's work, we all have to learn not to do anything without fellowship.

Among us we should have the blending of all the individual members of the Body of Christ, the blending of all the churches in certain districts, the blending of all the co-workers, and the blending of all the elders. Blending means that we should always stop to fellowship with others....If we isolate and seclude ourselves, we will lose much spiritual profit. Learn to fellowship. Learn to be blended. (The Divine and Mystical Realm, pp. 86-87)

Today's Reading

If in a local church one brother has a ministry to preach the gospel and another has a ministry to build up the saints, they must coordinate. Otherwise, they may cause a problem....If brothers with different ministries do not know how to coordinate, they will compete and may even strive against each other....When the brother who is burdened for the gospel is functioning, moving straight forward, the brother who is burdened for shepherding should learn to walk backward. Likewise, when the brother who is burdened for shepherding is functioning and moving straight forward, the brother who is burdened to preach the gospel should walk backward. The other saints should follow these two, walking sideways, sometimes in the direction of the ministry of gospel preaching and at other times in the direction of the ministry of shepherding....To walk backward is to say Amen to another's ministry, function, and burden. While one brother is walking straight forward according to his burden, you should say Amen and walk backward in coordination with him. To walk sideways is also to say Amen to another's function....In the church life we all need to learn to have four kinds of walk: the straightforward walk, the backward walk, the sideways walk to the right, and the sideways walk to the left. If we do not learn to have these four kinds of walk, we will become a problem to our local church. The more we grow, learn, function, and minister, the more trouble we will cause because we know only how to walk forward and to have turns.

If you are the one who is walking straight forward, you must be very careful to walk according to the leading of the Spirit. Ezekiel 1:12 says, "Wherever the Spirit was to go, they went." To follow the Spirit is the responsibility of the one walking straight forward; it is not the responsibility of those walking backward or sideways. If the one who is walking straight forward is not careful to follow the leading of the Spirit, the coordination will be damaged.

Sometimes a certain brother...[who] is naturally humble...hesitates and does not take the lead in a bold way,...[and] this causes the church to be delayed and to have no direction for its going on. At other times one who should not be leading takes the lead. This damages the church life.

We should apply this matter of coordination not only in a particular local church but also among the churches. This means that we should be followers of the churches (1 Thes. 2:14). We are one Body in one move of the Lord. When one church takes the lead in a definite direction under the leading of the Holy Spirit, we all should walk backward and sideways to follow. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 70-73, 78)

Further Reading: The Divine and Mystical Realm, ch. 6

« WEEK 4 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:13-14 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches; the fire went to and fro among the living creatures, and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran to and fro like the appearance of a lightning bolt.

[In Ezekiel 1:13] we see that the result of the coordination of the living creatures is that they become burning coals [and burning torches]. There is a fire among them and within them. Because they are coordinated ones, God comes in as fire, and each of them becomes a burning coal....Where there is coordination, there will surely be the burning coals.

In the coordination we burn one another. You burn me, and I burn you. However, if we are isolated from the saints and do not attend the meetings, we will not be burning coals....From experience we can testify that the more we coordinate together, the more we burn one another. The issue, the result, of coordination is that we all become burning coals. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 73-74)

Today's Reading

The burning of the coals does at least three things. First, it burns out everything that is negative. If something is put upon a heap of burning coals, that thing will be burned. If there is proper coordination in the church, there will be a burning to burn away such things as worldliness, the flesh, self-aims, self-goals, pride, opinions, and boasting. All kinds of negative things will be burned away by the coordination. Anything that does not correspond to God and to the nature of God will be burned out by the sanctifying and purifying fire of the burning coals, and only what is of God will remain. This is the proper condition of the church life.

Second, the burning of the coordination will make us fervent, intensely hot. Instead of coldness and lukewarmness, everyone will be burned and burning. When others come to the church, they will realize that they cannot stay unless they are willing to be burned....This burning will not allow you to be like the church in Laodicea, which was lukewarm, having no fervency, no burning.

Third, the burning in the coordination produces the power and impact of the church. The impact in a local church comes out of the burning. This power is internal and mysterious because it comes from the burning. If you want to have impact, you must be coordinated, and in this coordination you will become burning. Then out of this burning will be the impact and the power. The negative things will be consumed, you will be set on fire, and you will have power and impact.

The four living creatures look not only like burning coals but also like burning torches. Whereas the coals are for burning, the torches are for enlightening. From the proper coordination in a local church, there will not only be burning but also enlightening and shining. If a church is normal in its condition, it will be full of burning coals and enlightening torches.

Whenever the coals are burning, the torches will be shining. This means that the sanctifying fire becomes the sanctifying light. The more the fire burns, the more the light enlightens. If the fire burns us thoroughly, we will be enlightened thoroughly. However, if we do not allow the sanctifying fire to burn us in a certain matter, we will not be enlightened regarding this matter. The areas in which we have been burned by the sanctifying fire spontaneously become the areas in which we are enlightened and concerning which we can enlighten others. If a particular aspect of your character has been burned by the sanctifying fire, in this matter you will be enlightened, and thus you will be able to enlighten others in this matter.

The more intensely the fire burns in the church, the brighter will be the shining in that church. Everything negative will be exposed and burned. In the proper church life there should be nothing of darkness among the brothers and sisters. Every corner should be thoroughly enlightened. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 74-75)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 7

« WEEK 4 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:26-27 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it. Then I saw something like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around;...I saw something like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him.

Among the coordinated living creatures, who are burning coals and burning torches, there is the fire going up and down. This indicates that the fire is not static but is always moving, because the fire is God Himself. Whenever the church is properly coordinated, burning as coals and enlightening as torches, there will be the divine fire going up and down.

The fire among the living creatures has its source in God's burning fire. God's fire is not next to the living creatures; it is above them. There is fire with the living creatures because in their fellowship they allow God to move freely among them. Thus, the fire in their fellowship is the likeness of God's fire.

The likeness of God is burning fire [Ezek. 1:27], and the likeness of the four living creatures also is burning fire [vv. 13-14]. This indicates that the living creatures have the likeness of God's sanctification. They are like God in sanctification. From this we see that the more we are burned and enlightened, the more we have God's likeness and express Him. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 76)

Today's Reading

Ezekiel 1:13b says, "The fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning." The fact that the fire was bright indicates that the living creatures manifested a glorious and majestic condition. This should be the condition in the church life today. If this is the situation in the church, there will be no discord. On the contrary, the younger ones will obey the older ones, and the older ones will serve the younger ones. Such a situation is beautiful and radiant.

If we want this to be the condition of the church, we must be thoroughly burned and enlightened. The more we are burned and enlightened, the more others will see the brightness of God's glory, beauty, and majesty.

In the fire there is not only brightness but also the flashing of lightning. Whereas the brightness is usual, the flashing of lightning is special, as it is often related to storms and darkness. Ordinarily, the church should be full of God's enlightening with its brightness. However, at special times—in an emergency or in a crisis—there may be the flashing of lightning. This means that at special times there may be a special light that flashes suddenly and causes others to be astonished.

Ezekiel 1:14 says, "And the living creatures ran to and fro like the appearance of a flash of a lightning bolt." This indicates that the living creatures, having such a coordination, being the burning coals and the burning torches, and having the fire going up and down, will not walk but run. They run because they have the power and the impact. In some churches, however, there is no running. Instead, there is fighting. In other churches the saints are either sitting or squatting. In still other churches they may be crawling. A proper church is a church that runs.

The church runs because in that church there is the proper coordination. The church runs like lightning, and as the church runs it gives light to others....Every local church should be like this. Since the coordination is for the move and the move is in the coordination, with such a coordination there is the move of a local church.

Others will see the light in our running. Wherever we go and whatever we do, we will manifest the lightning. With us there will be the flashing of light, causing others to be enlightened. This moving is the proper church life. Such a coordination will bring in the Lord's presence and blessing, and it will keep the church in a proper balance, preventing it from going to extremes. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 76-78)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 7

« WEEK 4 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one...

Matt. 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

If as believers in Christ we are not in the Lord and in the grace of God, we cannot be joined to others. But if we abide in God, rely on God, and express God, we can coordinate together in God. Our coordination, therefore, is not based on our ability and talent but on our dwelling in God and depending on God. If we all abide in God, trust in God, and express God, God will become the power and the means of our coordination. We will then coordinate and move in oneness because we are in God. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 86)

Today's Reading

[The move of the Divine Trinity with the divine coordination] is a good pattern our Head has set up for His Body, of which we all are members. As members of Him, we should behave, act, and live according to what He did and was. When we do things, we should learn to do them not by ourselves. We are the doers, but we should not be the channel....Furthermore, we should not be the beneficiary of what we do. Someone else should be our beneficiary to receive the very benefit of our doing and of our being.

The move of the Divine Trinity as seen in Hebrews 9:14 and Matthew 12:28 is an excellent and beautiful example for us to follow. In saving us, He did not act individualistically. He did not do things to Himself and for Himself, nor did He trust in Himself.

In Matthew 12:28 the Lord said, "But if I [the Son], by the Spirit of God [the Triune God including the Father], cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God [the Triune God] has come upon you."...[The Lord] was not individualistic. He was not doing something by Himself and for Himself. He was doing something by the Spirit of God and for the kingdom of God. He never did anything by Himself or for Himself. Is this not beautiful? This shows us the excellency in the Divine Trinity.

This is surely a good pattern for our coordination. The Lord has produced a Body constituted with many members, so all the members should learn of Him...to be coordinated in His Body....We should behave ourselves just like our Head. He behaved Himself in a way of neither doing anything by Himself nor doing anything for Himself. Today in the church life, the Body of Christ has not been built up adequately because of the shortage of the proper coordination. If we want to be coordinated with all the members in the Body, we have to learn of Christ our Head, taking Him as our pattern. We should not do anything by ourselves or for ourselves. I may do something according to the will of God, but what I do should not be by myself but by some others. Furthermore, what I do should not be for myself but for the interest, the right, of God on this earth. This is a beauty, and this beauty is a real excellency, a real divine attribute, and an excellent virtue that we need to copy....[The Lord] cast out demons by another One and for another One. His spirit was so humble, so selfless. (Living in and with the Divine Trinity, pp. 48-49, 45-46)

When we are with the Lord in the Father and in the glory, we are one. But when we are in ourselves, we cannot be one with others. In ourselves we are one only with ourselves, not with anyone else. If we desire to be one with others, we need to move out of the self and into God the Father. No one can make this move for us; we are responsible to do it ourselves. When we move out of ourselves and into the Father and into the Father's glory, we are one and are even perfected into one. (CWWL, 1978, vol. 3, "Truth Messages," p. 336)

Further Reading: The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ, ch. 6; Living in and with the Divine Trinity, ch. 5; CWWL, 1978, vol. 3, "Truth Messages," chs. 6-7

<< WEEK 4 —HYMN

Hymns, #840

Freed from self and Adam's nature

The Church — Her Building

840

1. Freed from self and A - dam's na - ture, Lord, I would be built by
Thee With the saints in - to Thy tem - ple, Where Thy glo - ry we shall
see. From pe - cu - liar traits de - liv - er, From my in - de - pen - dent
ways, That a dwell - ing place for Thee, Lord, We will be thru all our days.

2. By Thy life and by its flowing
I can grow and be transformed,
With the saints coordinated,
Builded up, to Thee conformed;
Keep the order in the Body,
There to function in Thy will,
Ever serving, helping others,
All Thy purpose to fulfill.

3. In my knowledge and experience
I would not exalted be,
But submitting and accepting
Let the Body balance me;
Holding fast the Head, and growing
With His increase, in His way,
By the joints and bands supplying,
Knit together day by day.

4. By Thy Spirit daily strengthened
In the inner man with might,
I would know Thy love surpassing,
Know Thy breadth and length and height;
Ever of Thy riches taking,
Unto all Thy fulness filled,
Ever growing into manhood,
That Thy Body Thou may build.

5. In God's house and in Thy Body
Builded up I long to be,
That within this corporate vessel
All shall then Thy glory see;
That Thy Bride, the glorious city,
May appear upon the earth,
As a lampstand brightly beaming
To express to all Thy worth.

WEEK 5 —OUTLINE

The Wings of an Eagle, the Hands of a Man, and the Feet of a Calf

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:5-11; Isa. 40:31; Acts 16:7; Eph. 4:1; 1 Cor. 2:15

<< DAY 1 >>

- I. The wings of an eagle signify the resurrection power of Christ, God's power in life applied to us and becoming our grace (Ezek. 1:6b, 9, 11b; Exo. 19:4; Isa. 40:31; 2 Cor. 4:7; 1:12; 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:10):
- A. The Bible uses the eagle as a symbol of the Spirit when it speaks about the Spirit of power (Isa. 40:31).
 - B. When God saved the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Himself at Mount Sinai, He told them that He bore them like an eagle, carrying them upon His wings; this was a word of grace to let them know that He was full of grace toward them (Exo. 19:4).
 - C. Psalm 103:5 says that God can satisfy us so that our youth is renewed like the eagle; it is possible for us to have our youth renewed like the eagle by taking Christ as our life (Col. 3:4).

<< DAY 2 >>

- D. "Those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not become weary; / They will walk and will not faint" (Isa. 40:31):
 - 1. To wait on Jehovah, the eternal God, means that we terminate ourselves, that is, that we stop ourselves with our living, our doing, and our activity, and receive God in Christ as our life, our person, and our replacement (8:17; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 12:2; Col. 4:2).
 - 2. Such a waiting one will be renewed and strengthened to such an extent that he will mount up with wings like eagles; as a transformed person, he will not only walk and run but also soar in the heavens, far above every earthly frustration.
- E. What we are and what we do should not be according to our own wisdom, strength, and ability but by the grace of God, for we have no boast in ourselves or in anything else but only in the Lord (2 Cor. 1:12; 10:17; 1 Cor. 3:21; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:3; Jer. 9:23-24).
- F. The grace, power, and strength of the Lord are both for moving and for covering us:

1. On the one hand, the Lord's grace is the power for us to move; on the other hand, the Lord's power is our protection, our hiding place (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9; Psa. 17:8; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4).

2. The front face of the four living creatures is the face of a man, but the body is that of an eagle (Ezek. 1:10a, 11b):

a. The living creatures look like a man but move like an eagle.

b. The two wings for moving and the two wings for covering indicate that there is something mysterious about us and that this gives others the impression of the Divine Being.

« DAY 3 »

II. The spiritual significance of the hands of a man is that a normal Christian should always do things exactly like a man (v. 8a; Acts 20:34):

A. Paul's writings indicate that although he experienced the eagle's wings, he was still very human in his living, taking the human way and doing things in a human way (1 Thes. 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).

B. No matter how much the grace of God is with us and no matter how much the Lord is empowering us, we must nevertheless do things in a human way:

1. Under the eagle's wings there should be human hands, and these hands should always be working (Eph. 4:28; Acts 20:35; 18:3; 2 Thes. 3:6-12).

2. We need both the wings of the Lord's empowering grace and the hands of a man, cooperating with God in a human way.

C. The highest humanity is one in which divinity is added to our humanity and in which the divine attributes are expressed in our human virtues (1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a; Matt. 5:44; Phil. 4:5-7; Luke 23:34a; Matt. 18:21-22; 1 Cor. 4:2; 7:25b; Psa. 37:3; 1 Pet. 5:5-6; John 13:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:8; Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:2).

« DAY 4 »

D. Christian humanity does not refer to our natural virtues; rather, it is the Christ who lives in us and out of us (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a; 2 Cor. 12:2).

E. We all need to learn to be human Christians, living in a Jesusly human way according to the humanity of Jesus, which is His human life in resurrection (4:10-11):

1. To damage humanity is to ruin both the means and the channel created by God for His economy.

2. The more spiritual we are, the more human we will be.

3. If we would live Christ, we need to learn to be human in a genuine way:

- a. On the one hand, we have the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); on the other hand, we are normal human beings.
 - b. The fact that we have the divine nature with the divine life does not mean that we no longer need to be human.
 - c. We need to live a genuinely human life by the divine life and nature; in this way we will be able to live the highest human life, a life like that of the Lord Jesus (Eph. 4:20-21).
- F. When Christ comes into us as life, He is the eternal life with both the divine life and nature and the human life and nature; now our wonderful Savior lives, acts, moves, and works as life within us in a quiet, normal, ordinary way and also in a very human way (Col. 3:4, 12-14).

<< DAY 5 >>

- G. The Spirit, who was not yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified in resurrection, is the Spirit with the humanity of Jesus; the Spirit today has been constituted with the glorified humanity of Jesus (Luke 24:26; John 7:37-39).
- H. We need to experience the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7):
- 1. The Spirit of Jesus refers to the Spirit of the incarnated Savior who, as Jesus in His humanity, passed through human living and death on the cross.
 - 2. This indicates that in the Spirit of Jesus there is not only the divine element of God but also the human element of Jesus and the elements of His human living and His suffering of death as well.
- III. The spiritual significance of the feet of a calf is that we should walk like a calf, having straight feet; we should walk not according to our crooked human feet but with the feet of a calf (Ezek. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:12):**
- A. The apostle Paul speaks of walking with the straight feet of a calf (2:17; 1 Thes. 2:3-4, 12; Eph. 4:1).
- B. The calf's feet are not only straight but also cloven, divided; the divided hoof signifies that in our Christian walk we need discernment of what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of God (Lev. 11:4-6; Phil. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:14-15):
- 1. The development of the ability to discern is based upon learning and experience (Heb. 4:12; 5:14; 1 Cor. 2:15):
 - a. The degree of the learning and experience we have before God is the degree of the discernment we will have.
 - b. The most profound discernment comes from the most profound dealings.

<< DAY 6 >>

- 2. "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge

and all discernment” (Phil. 1:9):

a. Discernment is the ability to sense things; the Greek word for discernment means “sensitive perception, moral tact.”

b. According to Paul, we should love with a mind full of knowledge and discernment:

(1) This knowledge and discernment are Christ Himself; when we experience Christ, He becomes our knowledge and discernment, our perceptive power.

(2) The more we experience Christ, the more we will discern matters not by our cleverness but by the Christ who lives within us (Gal. 2:20).

3. We need to discern between ethics and Christ, for ethical teachings are not of Christ, of the Spirit, of resurrection, or of the new creation (6:15).

4. Romans 8 reveals that the best way to discern a matter—the secret of discernment—is to discern according to life or death.

C. The calf’s feet “sparkled like the sight of burnished bronze” (Ezek. 1:7); this indicates that we need a walk that has been tested and burned by the Lord so that it will be like shining bronze, enlightening and testing others (Rev. 1:15a).

D. In the Bible a calf signifies freshness, livingness, and vigor:

1. A calf is young, vigorous, and full of energy; this indicates that our Christian walk should be a “skipping walk,” a walk that is full of life (Psa. 29:6; Mal. 4:2).

2. If we enjoy grace and live in the presence of God, we will always be new and fresh, and with us there will be no oldness.

IV. If as living creatures we have the wings of an eagle, the hands of a man, and the feet of a calf, we can be coordinated and become one corporate entity for the carrying out of God’s economy.

« WEEK 5 —DAY 1 »»

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 19:4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Isa. 40:31 Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and will not become weary; they will walk and will not faint.

According to the pure Word it is easy to see the spiritual significance of the eagle's wings, the man's hand, and the calf's feet. In the Bible the wings of an eagle signify the strength of God applied to us. In Exodus 19:4, God said to His people, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." This verse speaks of the strength of God applied to His people. Isaiah 40:31...also shows us that God's strength applied to us is like the wings of an eagle. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 58)

Today's Reading

In the New Testament the eagle's wings are the grace, the power, and the strength of God in Christ applied to us. Second Corinthians 4:7 says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us." This is the eagle's wings. In 1:12 Paul says, "Our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you." Again, this is the eagle's wings. Furthermore, in 12:9a the Lord Jesus said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Because of this, in 12:9b Paul could say, "Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me." In our experience of the Lord, the power of Christ may overshadow us, even as the eagle's wings overshadow the covered ones. From these verses we can see that the eagle's wings signify the strength and the grace of the Lord Jesus applied to us.

In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me." This is the eagle's wings. Whatever we do and whatever we are should not be according to our own wisdom, strength, and ability but by the grace, power, and strength of the Lord. Therefore, as Paul says, if we boast, we should boast in the Lord (1:31). We have no boast in ourselves or in anything else but only in the Lord. His power, strength, and grace are the eagle's wings to us today. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 58-59)

On the one hand, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of power, and on the other hand, He is the Spirit of life. He is the Spirit of power without and the Spirit of life within. Therefore, the Bible uses two symbols to speak about these two aspects of the Holy Spirit. It uses the eagle as the symbol of the Spirit when it speaks about the Spirit of power, and it uses the dove as the symbol when it speaks about the Spirit of life. (Words of Life from the 1988 Full-time Training, p. 20)

When God saved the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai, He told them that He had brought them out of Egypt like an eagle, carrying them on its wings. This was a word of grace to let them know that He was full of grace toward them. (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 4, pp. 671-672)

Psalms 103:5 says that God can satisfy us so that [we may have] our youth renewed like the eagle's. Our youth can come back by taking Christ as life into us. We have to drop our oldness and say, "Praise the Lord! We have Christ within, so our youth has to come back." It is possible for us to have our youth renewed like the eagle's by taking in Christ all day as our life. (CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, "The Fulfillment of God's Purpose by the Growth of Christ in Us," p. 35)

Further Reading: Words of Life from the 1988 Full-time Training, ch. 2; CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, "The Fulfillment of God's Purpose by the Growth of Christ in Us," ch. 5

« WEEK 5 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Cor. 10:17 But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

[Isaiah 40:31 says], “Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not become weary. / They will walk and will not faint.”...The wings here signify the resurrection power of Christ. Those who stop themselves and wait on Jehovah will experience this resurrection power, be transformed, and soar in the heavens. (Life-study of Isaiah, p. 143)

Today's Reading

To wait on the eternal God (Isa. 40:28) means that we terminate ourselves, that is, that we stop ourselves with our living, our doing, and our activity, and receive God in Christ as our life, our person, and our replacement. Such a waiting one will be renewed and strengthened to such an extent that he will mount up with wings like eagles. He will not only walk and run but also soar in the heavens, far above every earthly frustration. (Isa. 40:31, footnote 1)

Each of the four living creatures had four wings, two for covering and two for moving. “Their wings were joined one to another” (Ezek. 1:9a). This joining is for moving....This moving is altogether a corporate matter.

The Bible reveals that the wings of an eagle are not only for power but also for protection....Psalm 57:1 speaks of making our refuge in the shadow of God's wings, and 63:7 speaks of rejoicing in the shadow of His wings. Psalm 91:4 says, “With His pinions He will cover You, / And under His wings You will take refuge.”

The grace, power, and strength of the Lord are both for moving and for covering us. On the one hand, the Lord's grace is the power for us to move; on the other hand, the Lord's power is our protection, our hiding place. We are under the overshadowing of the grace and the power of Christ, and we are under the covering of His power. Whatever we do and whatever we are must be by the grace of the Lord and the power of the Lord. At the same time, we are under the overshadowing, the covering, of the Lord's grace and power.

This indicates that as Christians, God's children, we should have an element that causes others to wonder at us. They should sense that something is covering and overshadowing us. They should realize that we are normal, yet there is something empowering, strengthening, overshadowing, and covering us.

The front face of the four living creatures is the face of a man, but the body is that of an eagle. Two of his wings are stretched forth to join to the other living creatures, and two of his wings are wrapped around his body for a cover. Thus, if you look at his face, he looks like a man, but if you look at his body, he looks like an eagle. He looks like a man, but he moves like an eagle. This indicates that we must always express ourselves like a normal man, for example, like a normal and proper husband, wife, parent, or child. But when others look at us and consider us, they should realize that there is something covering, empowering, strengthening, protecting, and overshadowing us. As a result, it should be difficult for others to describe us. Those who work with such a person might say, “He can suffer the things we cannot suffer, and he can bear a responsibility that we cannot bear. He understands things more deeply than we do. What kind of person is he? How can he live this way?”

The point here is that with us as children of God there should always be something mysterious. Although we suffer, we are happy and rejoice in the Lord because something is covering us....These moving and overshadowing wings should give others an impression of the Divine Being. We have the four wings of an eagle, giving others the impression that we have God with us as our power and protection. This is the eagle. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 59-60)

Further Reading: Life-study of Isaiah, msg. 21

« WEEK 5 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my needs and to those who are with me.

Phil. 4:5 Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Ezekiel 1:8a says, “The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides.” This indicates that a proper, normal Christian should always do things exactly like a man. This is to use man’s hands. This was Paul’s testimony in Acts 20:34: “You yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my needs and to those who are with me.” (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 60-61)

Today’s Reading

Regarding faith in God, we need to be balanced. Some may claim that since they have faith in the almighty God to supply all their needs, there is no need for them to use their hands to do anything. In particular, they may suppose that there is no need for them to work in a human way. But consider the apostle Paul. Paul was balanced; with him there always were two sides. His writings indicate that he had not only the eagle’s wings but also the hands of a man. He could say that he conducted himself not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God and that the grace of God with him was not in vain. This is the side of the eagle’s wings. However, he also said that he labored more than all the other apostles. We may think that there was no need for Paul to work with his own hands. But Paul took the way of working with his own hands. This indicates that even though he experienced the eagle’s wings, he was still very human in his living, taking the human way and doing things in a human way.

Sometimes the young people may imagine that because they are seeking the Lord, there is no need for them to study hard. They may hope that, even without studying, they may pass their examinations with high grades. This attitude is mistaken. Young people, no matter how much you seek the Lord, love the Lord, and care for the Lord, you still need to be diligent in your studies. This means that no matter how much the grace of God is with us and no matter how much the Lord is empowering us, we must nevertheless fulfill our human duty in our daily living. For instance, we should eat healthy food in the human way and according to human principles. If we do not eat in a proper human way but instead try to behave like an angel, we will get sick. We have to do things in a human way. Under the eagle’s wings there should be human hands, and these hands should always be working. This is to be balanced.

The worldly people, on the contrary, have only the hands of a man; they do not have the wings of an eagle. But many so-called religious people seem to have only the eagle’s wings; they do not have the man’s hands. We need to have both the wings of the Lord’s empowering grace and the hands of a man, cooperating with God in a human way.

It is very significant that the human hands of the four living creatures are under the eagle’s wings. This indicates that in doing everything we should be under God’s grace and under His covering. In all that we do, we should depend on the Lord and express Him. In this matter we are altogether different from the worldly people, who neither rely on God nor express Him. All their actions do not express God but express themselves. In contrast, in everything we do we should be under the Lord’s grace and power, depending on Him and expressing Him. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 61-62)

If we go to the villages for the gospel outreach, and we give others the impression that we are like angels, I am afraid no one would dare to come close to us. Hence, we need to be human. This also is a part of our humanity.

The highest morality is one in which divinity is added to our humanity. This is the divine attributes of God expressed in the created virtues of man. It is also the most excellent virtue. (The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, p. 35)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 6; The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, chs. 3-4

« WEEK 5 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 4:10-11 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

The Christian humanity does not refer to our natural virtues; rather, it is the Christ who lives in us and out of us. According to Philippians, we are people in Christ. From the day we were saved, we have been transferred from Adam into Christ. According to the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, the Lord sowed Himself into us. However, 1 Corinthians 3 considers our salvation as a kind of planting (v. 6); we have been planted into Christ. On the one hand, it is Christ growing in us. Our hearts are like the soil; they are for growing Christ. On the other hand, it is of God that we are in Christ Jesus (1:30). It is God who has translated us from Adam into Christ. Today our position is in Christ. However, we have to attain to a condition in which we are found in Christ. Moreover, whether by life or death, Christ should be magnified in our body as always. This is the Christian humanity. (The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, p. 41)

Today's Reading

We all need to learn to be human. In fact, the more spiritual we are, the more human we shall be. If we would live Christ, we must learn to be human in a genuine way. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was very human.

To damage humanity is to ruin both the means and the channel created by God for His economy. The reason demons and fallen angels forbid marriage and command people to abstain from foods is that their intention is to destroy mankind. Thus, we in the church must be human and follow the standards of normal human living. Some have falsely accused us of not being human. We utterly repudiate these allegations. In the church life we definitely emphasize the proper humanity. I can testify that I myself live in a normal human way. If you examine my living, you will find me to be very human. I am not a "saint" or an angel; I am simply a human being. Furthermore, I encourage all the elders to be human. The elders should not help the saints in their locality to be like angels. We appreciate the angels, but we do not want to imitate them. Instead, we prefer to be human.

We should be human Christians. On the one hand, we have the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); on the other hand, we are normal human beings....We are to live a genuinely human life by the divine life and nature. In this way we shall be able to live the highest human life, a life like that of the Lord Jesus. When He was on earth, He lived a human life by means of the divine life and the divine nature. The Lord's human living was by the divine life. Our human living should be the same. Thus, we all must learn to be human. (Life-study of 1 Timothy, pp. 78-79)

We have seen clearly that after the Lord's resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit is in us as a Spirit who possesses both the divine life and nature and the human life and nature. Before He came into us, He was God mingled with man already. Do not think that He begins to be mingled with man only when He comes into us. When He comes into us as the eternal life with the divine nature, the human nature is included. When Christ comes into us as life, He is the eternal life with both the divine life and nature and the human life and nature. We may wonder why the eternal life that we have received is a life of the divine nature and the human nature as well. It is so that this life can work in us not only in a quiet, normal way but also in a human way. The wonderful Savior works, moves, lives, and acts as life within us in a quiet, normal, ordinary way and also in a very human way. (CWWL, 1963, vol. 4, "The Relationship of God with Man in God's New Creation," pp. 404-405)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Timothy, msg. 9; The Relationship of God with Man in God's New Creation, ch. 10

« WEEK 5 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:7 And their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the sight of burnished bronze.

2 Cor. 1:12 For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

The Spirit in John 7:37-39 is much related to the humanity of Jesus. This Spirit, who is the living water flowing from within us, is constituted of the humanity of Jesus. Without the humanity of Jesus, there could never be such a Spirit. This is made clear by verse 39, which says that the Spirit was not yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified. This proves that the Spirit was constituted with the glorified humanity of Jesus. We must realize that at this point the Scripture is speaking of a resurrected humanity. (CWWL, 1971, vol. 2, "Christ as the Reality," p. 101)

Today's Reading

The Spirit of Jesus [in Acts 16:7] and the Holy Spirit in the preceding verse are used interchangeably, revealing that the Spirit of Jesus is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a general title of the Spirit of God in the New Testament; the Spirit of Jesus is a particular expression concerning the Spirit of God and refers to the Spirit of the incarnated Savior who, as Jesus in His humanity, passed through human living and death on the cross. This indicates that in the Spirit of Jesus there is not only the divine element of God but also the human element of Jesus and the elements of His human living and His suffering of death as well. (Acts 16:7, footnote 1)

We all should walk like a calf, having straight hoofs....While we can apply the boldness of a lion to our Christian character, we should not apply the lion's paws to the Christian walk. Neither should we walk with the claws of an eagle. Those who walk with the claws of an eagle will eventually hurt others.

Also, we should not walk with the feet of a man. Man's feet are good, but they are somewhat crooked. Human cleverness is something crooked. This is why Paul said that he did not conduct himself in fleshly wisdom, that is, not in human cleverness. Instead of being crooked or clever, our Christian walk should be straight and frank.

If we read the four Gospels, we will see that while the Lord Jesus was on earth, He walked in a very straight way. Step by step His walk was straight. He walked on the earth with calf's hoofs.

Also the apostle Paul was very straight, frank, faithful, and honest in his walk. By reading Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, we can realize that Paul was a straight and frank person.

In addition to being straight, the calf's hoofs are also cloven, or divided. According to Leviticus 11:4-6 any animal that does not have cloven hoofs is not clean....Clean animals such as the cow and sheep have two characteristics: the chewing of the cud and the dividing of the hoof.

The divided hoof signifies that in our walk with the Lord we need a proper discernment to divide the right things from the wrong and the clean things from the unclean. To have a hoof that is not cloven, like that of a camel, is to have a walk without discernment. As believers in Christ, we need to have such a walk that we can discern what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of God. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 62-64)

This is an ironclad rule: the amount of learning and experience we have determines the ability in discernment we will achieve. There is no shortcut or second way here. If I have not been saved, I can never differentiate who is saved and who is not. If I have not been consecrated, I can never sense who is consecrated and who is not. The degree of learning and experience you have before God is the degree of discernment you will have. The most profound discernment comes out of the most profound dealings. (The Elders' Management of the Church, pp. 109-110)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1971, vol. 2, "Christ as the Reality," chs. 11-12; The Elders' Management of the Church, ch. 7

« WEEK 5 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all discernment.

Mal. 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.

[In Philippians 1:9] Paul prayed that our love would abound more and more in full knowledge and all discernment. The Greek word for discernment means “sensitive perception, moral tact.” Discernment is the ability to sense things. Paul did not want the Philippians to love in a foolish way. On the contrary, he encouraged them to love with a mind full of knowledge and discernment, sensitive perception, and moral tact.

The knowledge and discernment about which Paul speaks in 1:9 are actually Christ Himself. When we experience Christ, He becomes our knowledge and discernment. The reason we lack the knowledge and the discernment to differentiate between the different kinds of preaching is that we are short of the experience of Christ. (Life-study of Philippians, p. 17)

Today's Reading

It is not God's desire that we live according to certain ethical teachings. Ethics is not part of the new creation. It is not something of Christ, of the Spirit, or of resurrection life. Anything that is of Christ must be in resurrection, in the new creation, and of the Spirit. (Life-study of Philippians, p. 179)

According to the way revealed in Romans 8, we need to discern according to death or life. Many of those who have left the Lord's recovery have neither the life supply nor the enjoyment. This is an indication that they have taken in something that is not of the Lord. The secret of discernment is to discern according to life or death. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, p. 470)

Ezekiel 1:7 tells us that the calf's feet “sparkled like the sight of burnished bronze.” The shining of bronze comes from the heat of the furnace. The more the bronze is burned and tested, the brighter it shines. This indicates that we need a walk that has been tested and burned by the Lord....If we have been tested and examined by the Lord, our walk will shine like burnished bronze, giving light to others, testing them, and causing them to realize whether their walk is right or wrong.

In the Bible a calf signifies freshness and livingness. A believer in Christ who enjoys grace and lives in the presence of God is always new and fresh, and with him there is no oldness. Sometimes you may meet a brother who is quite young humanly but spiritually is rather old, lacking in freshness and newness. At other times you may have fellowship with an older brother who is very experienced in the Lord. Whenever he prays, you sense something new and fresh. In all of our activities as believers, we should be new and fresh. If we become old, we no longer are living creatures.

The Bible says that a calf skips and leaps (Psa. 29:6; Mal. 4:2). This means that a calf is alive. Our Christian walk should not be a dead walk but a “skipping walk,” a walk which is full of life. A calf is young and vigorous, full of energy. We all should be full of life, like a young calf, coming to the meetings like skipping calves. May the Lord cause us all to skip like calves!

All these points on the calf's hoofs are related to our Christian walk. The Christian walk is straight and frank. It is also a walk with discernment, a walk that shines and gives light to others and tests them, and a walk that is vigorous, full of life, energy, freshness, and newness.

The Christian life must be this kind of life, and the Christian walk must be this kind of walk. It is by having this kind of life and walk that we, the living creatures, can be coordinated and become one entity....We need a life that has the wings of an eagle and the hands of a man, and we need a walk that has the straight hoofs of a calf. May the Lord impress us with all these matters so that we may have the proper coordination in the church life. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 64-66)

Further Reading: Life-study of Philippians, msg. 22; Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msg. 53

<< WEEK 5 —HYMN

Hymns, #559

Savior, I by faith am touching Thee

Experience of Christ — Fellowship with Him

559

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in 3/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, F/C, C, Dm, Dm/F, G⁷, and G⁷/B. The lyrics for the first staff are: "1. Sav - ior, I by faith am touch - ing Thee, the source of ev - ery". The second staff continues the melody with chords: C, G⁷/D, C/E, F, C/E, C, G/D, and D⁷. The lyrics are: "good; Vir - tue now, by faith am claim - ing, Through the cleans - ing of Thy". The third staff is marked with a box labeled "Chorus" and contains the chords: G, G⁷/B, G⁷, C, G⁷/B, and G⁷. The lyrics are: "blood. (C) Touch - ing Thee, new life is glow - ing By Thy Spir - it's burn - ing". The fourth staff concludes the piece with chords: C, C⁷/E, F, C/E, F, C/G, G⁷, and C. The lyrics are: "flame; Cleansing, purg - ing, Spir - it fill - ing, Glo - ry to Thy Ho - ly Name!".

1. Sav - ior, I by faith am touch - ing Thee, the source of ev - ery
good; Vir - tue now, by faith am claim - ing, Through the cleans - ing of Thy
blood. (C) Touch - ing Thee, new life is glow - ing By Thy Spir - it's burn - ing
flame; Cleansing, purg - ing, Spir - it fill - ing, Glo - ry to Thy Ho - ly Name!

2. Touching Thee in faith, I take Thee

In Thy riches full and free;

All I am I open to Thee,

All Thou art Thou giv'st to me.

3. Touching now Thine outstretched scepter,

O most mighty King of kings;

Of Thy fulness now receiving,

High I mount on eagle wings.

4. Grace and virtue, strength and wisdom,

All my need, by Thee supplied;

Keep me touching, keep me claiming,

Keep me ever at Thy side.

WEEK 6 —OUTLINE

The High and Awesome Wheels

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:15-21

<< DAY 1 >>

- I. The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation presents a full picture of the economy of God (Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4) and of God's move on earth to carry out His economy:
 - A. In the book of Ezekiel God's economy and God's move in His economy are signified by a wheel (1:15):
 - 1. The hub of this great wheel signifies Christ as the center of God's economy, and the rim signifies Christ's counterpart, the church, which consummates in the New Jerusalem.
 - 2. The spokes of the wheel spreading from the hub to the rim signify the many believers as the members of Christ.
 - B. The appearing of the wheels on the earth beside the living creatures indicates that God's move on earth follows the coordination of the four living creatures.
 - C. The move by a wheel implies an extraordinary move with a purpose.
 - D. Furthermore, it implies that this move is not by our own strength.
 - E. The wheels being for the four faces of the living creatures (v. 15) indicates that if we would have the Lord's move, we must first live out the Lord, expressing Him (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21).

<< DAY 2 >>

- II. By the side of every living creature there is a high and awesome wheel (Ezek. 1:15-21):
 - A. The move of the wheels is the special, extraordinary move of the Lord for His eternal purpose by Him as our strength, power, and supply (cf. vv. 5-8, 19-20).
 - B. Our God is living (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:12), our Lord is moving (Matt. 16:18), and the Spirit is working (Rev. 5:6b) to carry out His eternal economy (cf. Dan. 11:32b).
 - C. God's move is the move of His economy in man to deify man to bring forth the one new man so that God in Christ may have His corporate expression and administration (Ezek. 1:10, 13, 15, 26-27; Eph. 2:15; 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-11).

« DAY 3 »

D. Every local church and every individual believer should have a high and awesome wheel with them (cf. Acts 13:1-2):

1. In order to participate in the Lord's move, we must have a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with Him (S.S. 1:2-4; Mark 12:30).
2. In order to participate in the Lord's move, we can go in His going, give in His giving, and pray in His praying:
 - a. We need to follow the Lamb wherever He may go, living a life of the altar and the tent by taking heed to our spirit and by honoring Christ as the Head and as the Body (Rev. 14:4; Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18; Mal. 2:15-16; 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5-6; 1 John 1:3).
 - b. We need to be cheerful givers, becoming fellow workers in the truth (2 Cor. 9:6-7; 3 John 7-8).

« DAY 4 »

c. We need to cooperate with the Lord through prayer to carry out His move, acting together with the acting God for the accomplishment of His economy as seen in the book of Acts:

- (1) We need the prayer that brought in the outpouring of the Spirit (1:14; 2:1-4, 16-17a).
- (2) We need the prayer that shook the earth and empowered the disciples with the Holy Spirit for the speaking of the word with boldness (4:24-31).
- (3) We need to give ourselves continually to and continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word (6:4).
- (4) We need the prayer that brought Peter into a trance and brought a heavenly vision to him (10:9-16).
- (5) We need the prayer that opened the prison gate for Peter (12:4-14).
- (6) We need the prayer that brought the five prophets and teachers into the Lord's commission (13:1-4).
- (7) We need the prayer that brought in a great earthquake and shook the foundation of the prison (16:23-26).
- (8) We need the prayer that brought Paul into a trance and into the Lord's speaking to him (22:17-21).

« DAY 5 »

III. The high and awesome wheels being upon the earth shows that God

needs a move on the earth (Ezek. 1:15; Matt. 6:10):

- A. Beryl is the appearance of the Lord when He is moving; the wheels having the appearance of beryl indicates that wherever the move of the wheels goes, it brings the appearance of the Lord (Ezek. 1:16a; Dan. 10:6).
- B. The wheels having the same appearance indicates that the move of the Lord has the same likeness and appearance in every church (Ezek. 1:16b; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 16:1; Rev. 1:12; 1 Thes. 2:14).
- C. The wheel within a wheel (Ezek. 1:16) shows the Lord's move in our move:
 - 1. The inner wheel, the Lord as the hub, is the source of power for the moving of the outer wheel, the church as the rim.
 - 2. For Elijah to pray in a prayer means that the Lord's prayer was within his prayer; this is the wheel within a wheel (James 5:17):
 - a. He did not pray in his feeling, thought, intention, or mood, or in any kind of motivation, arising from circumstances or situations, to fulfill his own purpose.
 - b. He prayed in the prayer given to him by the Lord for the accomplishing of His will (Rom. 8:26-27).
 - 3. The inner wheel is the motor, the dynamo, the generator, that causes the wheel to move:
 - a. If our move is genuine, it must be that within our move is the move of the Lord (cf. 1:9; 8:16).
 - b. In the church life the Lord Jesus is the hub—the wheel within the wheel—and we are the rim (cf. Col. 1:17-18).

« DAY 6 »

- D. The wheels going in four directions and not turning as they went indicates a move in coordination, without any turns (Ezek. 1:17; cf. v. 12 and footnote 1).
- E. In ourselves we should be small, but the wheel beside us, that is, the move of God's economy with us, should be high and awesome (v. 18; 1 Cor. 15:9; 2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11; Eph. 3:8-11).
- F. The high and awesome rims of the wheels being full of eyes indicates that if we are one with the Lord in His move, we will have His divine insight, foresight, and revelation (Ezek. 1:18; Eph. 1:17):
 - 1. The more we participate in the move of the Lord, the more we will be enlightened.
 - 2. The more we move, the more we will be able to see.
- G. The wheels following the living creatures indicates that the move of God's work depends upon our moving; it also indicates that if we move in faith, the Lord

will follow our move (Ezek. 1:19; 2 Cor. 5:7; 4:13, 18; cf. Eccl. 11:4).

H. The wheels follow the living creatures (Ezek. 1:19, 21), and the creatures follow the Spirit, but the Spirit is in the wheels:

1. This indicates that the move of the Lord in our move is in the principle of incarnation (v. 20; cf. 1 Cor. 7:10, 12).
2. This also indicates that we are one with the Lord, and He is one with us (6:17, 19; John 14:16-17; Acts 16:6-10; cf. Heb. 11:8, 27).
3. The Lord follows us, we follow the Spirit, and the Spirit is in the wheels (Ezek. 1:20-21).
4. This is the Lord's move on earth today, and this is the Lord's recovery.

« WEEK 6 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:15-16 And as I watched the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, for each of their four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship were like the sight of beryl. And the four of them had one likeness; that is, their appearance and their workmanship were as it were a wheel within a wheel.

The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation presents a full picture of the economy of God (Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4) and of God's move on earth to carry out His economy. In the book of Ezekiel God's economy and God's move in His economy are signified by a wheel. The hub of this great wheel signifies Christ as the center of God's economy, and the rim signifies Christ's counterpart, the church, which consummates in the New Jerusalem. The spokes of the wheel spreading from the hub to the rim signify the many believers as the members of Christ.

The appearing of the wheels on the earth beside the living creatures indicates that God's move on earth follows the coordination of the four living creatures. The move by a wheel implies an extraordinary move with a purpose. Furthermore, it implies that this move is not by our own strength. (Ezek. 1:15, footnote 1)

The wheels were at the side of the faces of the living creatures (Ezek. 1:15). This indicates that if we would have the Lord's move, we must first live out the Lord, expressing Him. If we live out the expression of Christ, we will have the wheel of the Lord's move. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 95)

Today's Reading

Abraham had not heard many doctrines about consecration, nor had he been urged by others to consecrate himself. But Abraham had seen God, and when he did, he immediately built an altar to God. O brothers and sisters, consecration is a spontaneous thing. Anyone to whom God has manifested Himself cannot do anything other than live for Him. Once God appears to a person, he will live totally for God. So it was with Abraham, and so it has been with everyone who has met God throughout the two thousand years of church history.

The altar has its issue in the tent. Genesis 12:8 says, "And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent." From then on, Abraham lived in God's house—Bethel. From then on, he lived in a tent. Actually, he lived in a tent before, but God did not mention it. Not until he had built the altar does the Word of God bring the tent into view.

What is a tent? A tent is something movable; it does not take root anywhere. Through the altar God deals with us; through the tent God deals with our possessions. At the altar Abraham offered up his all to God. Was he thereafter stripped of everything, even his clothing and belongings? No! Abraham still possessed cattle and sheep and many other things, but he had become a tent dweller. What was not consumed on the altar could only be kept in the tent. Here we see a principle. Everything we have should be placed on the altar. But there is still something left. These are the things that are for our own use. However, they are not ours; they are to be left in the tent.

Genesis 12:8 says, "And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah." This is Abraham's second altar. The altar led to the tent, and then the tent led again to the altar. With the altar, nothing is ours any longer, and whatever is left from the altar is placed in the tent. Nothing can occupy our heart anymore; our conscience is at peace before God, and we can boldly say to Him, "I have not held back one thing from You." In this way, the tent leads us back to the altar. If our possessions have taken root and we cannot drop them or move them anymore, we become bound by these things, and there can never be a second altar. (CWWN, vol. 37, pp. 92, 94)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 9; CWWN, vol. 37, "The Life of the Altar and the Tent," ch.

« WEEK 6 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:15 And as I watched the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures...

21 Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still; and whenever those were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up alongside them; for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

A wheel is for moving, not in an ordinary way but in a special way. At home, when we walk from the kitchen to our bedroom,...we do not need a wheel. But when we travel a distance, we need a wheel. When we do something to fulfill a purpose, we may also need a wheel. Thus, the move by a wheel is not an ordinary move but a special move with a purpose. The wheel in Ezekiel 1 implies a move with a purpose. Furthermore, the wheel implies that this move is not by our own strength. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 91)

Today's Reading

Concerning the direction of the Lord's move today, I fully believe that our God is living (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:12), that our Lord is moving (Matt. 16:18), and that the Spirit is working (Rev. 5:6b). Since our God is living, our Lord is moving, and the Spirit is working, our Triune God must still be carrying on His unique work for the accomplishing of His eternal economy, just as He has worked for this in the past ages and centuries. Now we need to find out what our living, moving, and working God is doing today on this earth. What is He carrying on today on this earth to complete His work for His eternal economy, that is, to build up the organic Body of His Christ?

Both God and Christ are aspiring to see the Body of Christ built up, to see the bride prepared, and to see the kingdom brought in, that Christ may have a Body, that Christ may have His bride, and that God may have a kingdom on this earth for His eternal economy. There is no other way to accomplish this but the God-ordained way. (Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way, pp. 27, 31)

The New Testament, a record of God's move, shows us that God can never move apart from man. In the beginning of the New Testament, God moved into man, gained man, and became a man (Matt. 1:21-23; John 1:1, 14). He moved not only as God and not merely as man; He moved as the God-man. This was the reason that in the four Gospels the high priests, the elders, the scribes, and the Roman officials did not know who Jesus was. They could not determine whether His activities were the activities of God or the activities of a man. He was a mystery, for He was God, yet man; He was man, yet God.

Athanasius, one of the early church fathers, said concerning Christ, "He was made man that we might be made God," and "The Word was made flesh...that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified." This is the principle of God's move on earth. God's move is in man and through man. God's move is to deify man, making man God in life and in nature but not, of course, in the Godhead.

In the four Gospels Christ was just one person, but on the day of Pentecost, after His death, resurrection, ascension, and descension, He was enlarged and expanded from one person into thousands of persons (Acts 2:41). A large group of people began to move in the divine move. In the four Gospels God moved in man's move, but in Acts man moved in God's move. God and man moved together. The chief priests, the elders, the scribes, and the Roman officials did not understand what had happened to Peter and John, because they knew them only as Galilean fishermen (4:13). Nevertheless, they had to admit that what these men did was divine (4:16). When they moved, God moved. Eventually, Gamaliel, a great rabbi, advised the Sanhedrin, the highest court of the Jews, concerning the apostles, saying, "Withdraw from these men and leave them alone; for should this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest you be found to be even fighters against God" (5:38-39). (Life-study of Job, pp. 129-130)

Further Reading: Life-study of Job, msg. 24; Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way, ch. 2

« WEEK 6 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 13:1-2 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon...and Saul. And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

S.S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you—the king has brought me into his chambers—we will be glad and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine...

In Ezekiel 1:15 through 21 the four living creatures are not only for the expression of the Lord but also for the move of the Lord. The Lord moves on the earth by them. Whenever a church is proper, expresses the Lord, and has the proper coordination with the fire going up and down, the move of the Lord will be with that church....If there is a move, it will be manifest to all. Everyone can see the great wheel, high and dreadful, for it is at the side of the living creatures for all to see. The wheel is simply there.

Every local church needs to have such a high and dreadful wheel beside it. Furthermore, every individual believer, if he is proper and normal, should also have a wheel.

This was the situation in Acts 13....These prophets and teachers [v. 1] were living creatures coordinating together and having the burning coals and the burning torches. They fulfilled all the requirements in Ezekiel 1 related to being in the Lord's move. Thus, the move of the great wheel was with them. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 92-93)

Today's Reading

The living creatures have more than one way to move. First, they can move by flying because they have the wings of an eagle. They can also move by walking on the calf's hoofs. These two ways of moving are an ordinary move. But when they need to move in a special way, they move by a wheel.

On your job you need to move daily by the eagle's wings and the calf's hoofs. If you move in this way, your co-workers will see that with you there is something powerful. You can suffer things which others cannot suffer and you can endure things which others cannot endure because you have the eagle's wings. They can also realize that in your character and behavior you are honest, straight, frank, and sincere, having no crookedness. They will see the eagle's wings and the calf's hoofs upon you, and thus they will be convicted by you in their conscience.

In addition to this kind of move with you on your job, there should also be another kind of move—an extraordinary move, the move of a wheel. Eventually, because the move of the wheel is with you, some of your co-workers may be gained by the Lord. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 93)

In saving us and in building up a relationship with us, God came to visit us personally and affectionately. How personal and affectionate Jesus was in the Gospels! But this was His visitation to His chosen people in the physical life. He was a man physically but was not yet the Spirit.

When Christ was in the flesh, He could visit His disciples outwardly and openly, but there was no possibility for Him to visit His disciples inwardly and privately. Today Christ visits us privately and spiritually because He is the life-giving, compound, consummated, all-inclusive Spirit.

The pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17)...is private and spiritual....He visits us in our spirit privately, and He comes to us in a spiritual way, not a physical way. He visits us privately as the all-inclusive, consummated Spirit.

Christ the King brings His seekers into His chambers, that is into their regenerated spirit, His dwelling place [S.S. 1:4]....The more we pray, the more we have the feeling that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all in us (Eph. 4:6; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 8:9). According to our experience, our spirit is the Holy of Holies—the dwelling place, the inner chambers, of the Triune God...[where] He and we have the private and affectionate fellowship. (Crystallization-study of Song of Songs, pp. 19, 21)

Further Reading: Crystallization-study of Song of Songs, msg. 1-2

« WEEK 6 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, even as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth.

To pray means that we realize that by ourselves, with ourselves, and in ourselves, we are nothing....We want to do everything in God, with God, and through God. There are two significances of prayer. First, when we pray, we pray ourselves into God. Second, when we pray, we pray God into us....This is the principle of prayer.

In the book of Acts, we can see the prayer of the early saints for the organic building up of the Body of Christ. The prayer that we need is the prayer that brought in the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 1:14; 2:1-4, 16-17a). One hundred twenty saints praying with one accord for ten days brought in the outpouring of the Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit is the outpouring of God Himself. God poured out His entire being, the Spirit, upon the disciples. Immediately, the disciples became one with God. Here is the principle of praying ourselves into God and of praying God into us. Their prayer brought God from the heavens to the earth and upon themselves. (The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, pp. 93-94)

Today's Reading

We also need the prayer that shook the earth and empowered the disciples with the Holy Spirit for the speaking of the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:24-31). The disciples prayed with one accord (v. 24) according to the word of God (vv. 25-28), claiming the divine power through the name of Jesus (vv. 29-30). We have to pray to shake the environment. Many times the environment is a lie....We should not believe in the environment. Instead we have to believe in our prayer to change the environment.

In Acts 6:4 we see the prayer of the apostles to match the ministry of the word. This prayer was continuous and steadfast. Preaching the gospel, having home meetings, having small group meetings, or prophesying in the big meetings, are all for ministering the word. We must remember that the ministry of the word should be matched by our prayer.

Acts 10:9-16 shows us the prayer that brought Peter into a trance and brought a heavenly vision to him. This prayer at the appointed time (v. 9) brought Peter into a conversation with the Lord (vv. 13-16). This is another principle of prayer. To pray is to pray ourselves into a trance. A trance means that we have gotten out of our self.

We also need the kind of prayer that opened the prison gate for Peter (Acts 12:4-14). This shows the fervent prayer of the church (v. 5) in small groups (v. 12). To preach the gospel by visiting people, we surely have to pray to open the doors. Actually, the doors are opened to us not by our knocking on them but through our prayer.

For the organic building up of the Body of Christ, we need the prayer that brought the five prophets and teachers into the Lord's commission in Acts 13:1-4. These five prophets and teachers in Acts 13 served the Lord by praying and fasting, and that prayer brought them into the Lord's commission, the Lord's sending.

We also need the kind of prayer that brought in a great earthquake and shook the foundation of the prison (Acts 16:23-26)....When we go out to preach the gospel, we should pray that the "foundation" of the doors that we are knocking on will be shaken and will be opened to us.

In Acts 22:17-21 is the prayer that brought Paul into a trance and into the Lord's speaking to him. Both Peter and Paul prayed themselves into a trance. Again, we all need to pray ourselves into a trance, into the Lord's speaking to us. Paul did this in the temple, in a holy and quiet place (v. 17). In his prayer he received the Lord's commission (vv. 18-21).

The book of Acts is a record of the activities of the apostles...always matched by their prayers. (The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, pp. 94-97)

Further Reading: The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, ch. 9

« WEEK 6 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship were like the sight of beryl. And the four of them had one likeness; that is, their appearance and their workmanship were as it were a wheel within a wheel.

James 5:17 Elijah was a man of like feeling with us, and he earnestly prayed that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

Ezekiel 1:16a says, “The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship were like the sight of beryl.” According to Daniel 10:6 beryl was the appearance of the Lord when He was moving. This indicates that within the move of the wheels is the appearance of the Lord. Wherever the wheel goes it brings the appearance of the Lord. If the wheel moves to a certain place, it will bring the appearance of the Lord to that place. If a wheel is with you at school or at work, it will bring the Lord’s appearance there. Others will be able to see the beryl, the appearance of the Lord. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 95)

Today’s Reading

Ezekiel 1:16b says, “And the four of them had one likeness.” Here we are told that all four wheels have the same appearance, the same likeness. This indicates that the move of the Lord has the same likeness and appearance in every church. All the moves bear the same appearance of the Lord. Therefore, the likeness of all the wheels is the same.

If the church in one locality has a likeness, an appearance, which is different from the likeness of the church in another locality, something is wrong. The saints in a particular church may think that they need to build up their own local distinction, that they need to build up something typically and uniquely local. This is contrary to Ezekiel 1, where we are told that all four wheels bear the same likeness.

In every place and in every country the wheel must bear the same appearance. This does not mean that all the churches should follow one particular church. Rather, all the local churches should be mutual followers of one another (1 Thes. 2:14).

Ezekiel 1:16c says, “Their appearance and their workmanship were as it were a wheel within a wheel.” It is very significant that the wheels look like a wheel within a wheel.

James 5:17 may help us to understand this. This verse tells us that Elijah prayed earnestly. Literally, the Greek words translated “earnestly prayed ” mean “prayed in a prayer.” This indicates that a prayer from the Lord was given to Elijah, in which he prayed. He did not pray in his feeling, thought, intention, or mood, or in any kind of motivation, arising from circumstances or situations, to fulfill his own purpose. Rather, he prayed in the prayer given by the Lord for the accomplishing of His will. For Elijah to pray in a prayer means that there was a prayer within his prayer. This is the wheel within a wheel.

We may apply this matter of a wheel within a wheel to the church life. If the church is proper and is moving, then within the church’s moving there will be the move of the Lord. This means that in our move there is the Lord’s move. While we are moving, the Lord is moving in our moving.

The inner wheel is the source of power for the moving. This means that the inner wheel is the “motor” which causes the wheel to move. If our move is genuine, it must be that within our move is the move of the Lord.

Every wheel has a hub which turns the wheel. If the hub stops, the wheel stops. We may say that the hub is the little wheel within the rim of the big wheel. The big wheel turns because the little wheel is being turned. In the church life, the Lord Jesus is the hub—the wheel within the wheel—and we are the rim. If the churches do not move with the Lord, they have no way to go on because there is no wheel within the wheel. But when the churches move with the Lord Jesus, He becomes the wheel within the wheel. Nothing can frustrate or stop this kind of move. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 95-96, 98-99)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 9

« WEEK 6 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:17-20 ...They did not turn as they went. As for their rims, they were high and they were awesome; and the rims of the four of them were full of eyes all around. And whenever the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them....Wherever the Spirit was to go, they went—wherever the Spirit was to go. And the wheels were lifted up alongside them, for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

“Whenever they went, they went in their four directions; they did not turn as they went” (Ezek. 1:17). The wheels went on the four sides—in four directions—not turning as they went. This indicates a move in coordination, without any turns.

Ezekiel 1:18a says, “As for their rims, they were high and they were awesome.” Here I would point out that we should never try to make ourselves great; instead, we should be little ones. However, the wheel beside us should be so high that it is awesome. In our locality we should not have a small wheel only a few inches in diameter. On the contrary, in our city there should be a high wheel, a wheel that is awesomely high and that will surprise others. The wheel in every church should be so high that it is awesome. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 96)

Today's Reading

Ezekiel 1:18b goes on to say, “And the rims of the four of them were full of eyes all around.” Here we see that the high and awesome wheels are full of eyes. If we apply this to our spiritual experience, we will realize that it is absolutely correct to say that the wheels are full of eyes. If a church has no move and no wheel beside it, that church is blind....If your church has a high and awesome, wheel, a high and awesome move, within that move there will be many eyes. As a result, you will have insight, foresight, and other kinds of sight....Paul was a person full of eyes, [and]...he was clear about the present, the future, the world situation, the Word, the church, physical things, and spiritual things. As a person full of eyes, he was clear about everything....The more we have the move of the Lord, the more we are enlightened. The more we...participate in the Lord's move...the more eyes we will have and the more clearly we will see. The more move we have, the more we can see....If we stop moving, we will stop seeing. We Christians should be a moving people. The church must move in order to see.

Ezekiel 1:19 says, “And whenever the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and whenever the living creatures were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up also.” This verse tells us not that the living creatures follow the wheels but that the wheels follow the living creatures. When the creatures move, the wheels move. When the creatures stop, the wheels stop. When the creatures are lifted up, the wheels are lifted up.

This is contrary to the concept, held by many believers, that we need to wait until the Lord moves before we can move....The move of God's work, the move of the gospel, and the move of the church all depend on our moving. We need to have the confidence, the assurance, and the faith to go on boldly. If we move on boldly, the wheels will follow us. Let us act boldly and move on to take this country and to take the earth.

Verse 20 continues, “Wherever the Spirit was to go, they went—wherever the Spirit was to go. And the wheels were lifted up alongside them, for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” The wheels follow the creatures, and the creatures follow the Spirit, but the Spirit is in the wheels. It is hard to tell who follows whom. We are one with Him. One day when we meet the Lord we may say, “Lord, we followed You,” but the Lord may say, “No, I followed you.”

If we have the wheel with the coordination, it is difficult to determine who follows whom. We are one with the Lord, and the Lord is one with us. The Lord follows us, we follow the Spirit, and the Spirit is in the wheels. This is the Lord's move on earth today, and this is the Lord's recovery. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 96-97, 99-100)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 9

◀ WEEK 6 —HYMN

Hymns, #786

Pray to labor with the Lord

Prayer — Laboring with the Lord

786

1. Pray to la - bor with the Lord, Pray to pave the way for Him;
Pray to move Him and be moved From the cen - ter to the rim.

The musical score is written for two staves in G major (one sharp) and common time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn, with lyrics '1. Pray to la - bor with the Lord, Pray to pave the way for Him;'. The second staff contains the melody for the second line, with lyrics 'Pray to move Him and be moved From the cen - ter to the rim.'. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, C, G, G/B, Am, A7/C# for the first line, and D7/C, G/B, D7, G, Em, C, G/D, D7, G for the second line.

2. Pray to labor with the Lord,
Be identified with Him
In His purpose and His aim
Till His blessing floodeth in.

3. Pray to labor with the Lord;
Self-ambition and self-will
We must ever cast away,
All His purpose to fulfill.

4. Pray to labor with the Lord;
Let the Lord initiate
All the plan and all the work;
Then thru us He'll operate.

5. Pray to labor with the Lord
Till the wheel begins to move;
Pray together with the Lord
Till the Church His pow'r shall prove.

WEEK 7 —OUTLINE

The Highest Point in Our Spiritual Experience—Having a Clear Sky with a Throne above It

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:22-28; Rev. 4:2; 1 Kings 22:19; Isa. 6:1; Dan. 7:9-10

<< DAY 1 >>

- I. “Over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above” (Ezek. 1:22):
- A. Over the heads of the four living creatures, there is the firmament, the expanse, which we call the sky.
 - B. The sky above the living creatures is like a great expanse of awesome crystal, indicating that above them is a clear, open, and expanding heaven:
 - 1. They have a thorough fellowship with the Lord vertically and also a clear fellowship among themselves horizontally; they have a wide and stable span of fellowship (1 John 1:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:9).
 - 2. When we reach the point of having a clear, open, stable, and expanding heaven, there will be nothing between us and God, and nothing between us and one another.
 - C. The kind of sky we have as Christians depends on our conscience; our conscience is connected to our sky (Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12):
 - 1. We need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord, that is, have a clear fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3, 6).
 - 2. If we would have a clear sky, we need to deal with any offense or condemnation in our conscience (Acts 24:16).
 - 3. When there is nothing between us and the Lord, our sky will be crystal clear, and we will have not only a good conscience but also a pure conscience (1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; cf. Matt. 5:8; Prov. 22:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).

<< DAY 2 >>

- II. “And under the expanse one pair of their wings went straight out, one toward the other; each had another pair covering their bodies on this side and on that side” (Ezek. 1:23):
- A. The four living creatures stretch out two of their wings for coordination; this indicates that if we are under a clear, open, stable, and expanding sky, we can have a coordination that is altogether straight, with nothing crooked.
 - B. The four living creatures use the other two wings to cover themselves; this

indicates that in the coordination we should not display ourselves but should hide ourselves under the Lord's grace (2 Cor. 3:5-6; 12:9; Phil. 3:3).

III. "And I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, as they went; it was the sound of a tumult, like the sound of an army" (Ezek. 1:24a):

- A. The voice is not that of an individual but is strong, like the sound of great waters:
 - 1. The voice comes out of the wings that are joined together.
 - 2. The voice of the testimony of any local church should not be the voice of any individual believer; it must be the voice of a corporate, coordinated body, a voice that comes out of the proper coordination (cf. Acts 2:14).
- B. The voice of a corporate body becomes the voice of the Almighty, the voice of God Himself.
- C. The voice is also the voice of an army fighting the battle for God's economy (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7).

« DAY 3 »

IV. "Whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. And there was a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads. When they stood still, they dropped their wings" (Ezek. 1:24b-25):

- A. When the living creatures hear a voice out of the clear sky above their heads, they stop and let down their wings:
 - 1. This indicates that they know not only how to speak and sound forth their voice but also how to listen to God's voice (1 Kings 19:11-12; cf. Exo. 21:5-6; Isa. 50:4-5; Luke 10:38-42).
 - 2. Whenever they listen to God's voice, they stop moving, stand still, and lower their wings.
 - 3. They know how to give the voice by moving, and they know how to listen to God's voice by stopping.
 - 4. In spiritual things, seeing depends on hearing; hearing is deeper than seeing and more intimate than seeing (Rev. 2:7a; 1:10, 12; Isa. 50:4-5; Matt. 18:15-17).
- B. A clear and open heaven, speaking for the Lord, and listening to the Lord are all matters of fellowship (1 John 1:7):
 - 1. Genuine fellowship is related to genuine coordination.
 - 2. When we have fellowship with God and with one another, there will be genuine coordination among us; then we can speak for God and also listen quietly to His speaking.

« DAY 4 »

V. We need to see a vision of the throne of God for the divine administration throughout the universe (Rev. 4:2; 5:1; 6:16; 7:9; 8:3; 21:5; Dan. 7:9-10):

- A. The book of Revelation unveils God's universal administration; this book reveals that the universe operates according to God's administration (4:2, 5).
- B. The throne in Revelation 4 and 5 is the throne of divine authority:
 - 1. God's throne is related to His administration, which is a matter of His economy (Eph. 1:10; 3:9).
 - 2. God on the throne is behind the scene, ruling over everyone and everything (Isa. 6:1; 1 Kings 22:19).
 - 3. Everything in the world situation is decided on the throne; nothing can happen outside the rule of God's throne (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Luke 22:31-32).

« DAY 5 »

VI. The highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with the throne above it (Ezek. 1:26-28):

- A. The throne is the center of the universe, and it is where God is (Rev. 4:2):
 - 1. The Lord's presence is always with the throne and can never be separated from the throne.
 - 2. The Lord's throne is not only in the third heaven but also in our spirit; therefore, the Lord's throne is always with us (Heb. 4:12, 16 and footnote 161).
- B. If we have a clear sky, the throne will be present, and we will spontaneously be under the ruling and reigning of the throne.
- C. For God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us.
- D. To have the throne above a clear sky is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life.
- E. In our spiritual experience, to reach the point of having the throne above a clear sky means that in everything we are completely submissive to God's authority and administration.
- F. The clearer our sky is, the more we are under the throne; the more we have clear fellowship with the Lord, the more we will be under His authority (cf. Rev. 22:1).
- G. If we have the throne above the clear sky, we are greatly blessed, and we should worship God for this blessing.
- H. Today there are not many believers who are living completely under the

ruling of God:

- 1.The goal of dealing with the conscience is to recover us from human rule through self-rule to God's rule so that we may be directly under His control.
- 2.In His complete salvation God desires to recover us to divine rule so that we may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority.
- 3.To be under God's rule means that we live by the intuition of the spirit.
- 4.The more we are ruled by God, the more weighty and noble we become.

VII. The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for Him to accomplish His eternal purpose (4:11; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11):

- A.God is a God of purpose, having a will according to His good pleasure (1:5, 9).
- B.In His economy God administrates the universe to fulfill His purpose (Rev. 4:11).
- C.If we have a throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us (2 Tim. 1:9).
- D. If we want God's purpose and plan to be carried out in us and with us, we must submit to the throne.

« DAY 6 »

VIII. The only authority in the church is the throne above the clear sky (Matt. 28:18-19; 20:20-28):

- A.In the church there is no human authority (23:11; 20:25-27).
- B.Instead of trying to rule over others, we should humble ourselves and remain under the throne above the clear sky.
- C.If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10).
- D. Our weight before God depends on the degree of our subjection to God's authority; the more we submit to the throne, the weightier we will be.

IX. In Ezekiel 1:26 "the likeness of a throne" is "like the appearance of a sapphire stone":

- A.A sapphire stone is blue in color, and blue is a heavenly color indicating the situation and condition of God's presence (Exo. 24:10).
- B.The throne being in the likeness of a sapphire stone indicates the presence of God in a heavenly situation.
- C.If we have God's throne above the clear sky, we will be in a heavenly situation, having the appearance of a sapphire stone with the heavenly situation, atmosphere, and condition of the Lord's presence.
- D. We should care only for the presence of the Lord, not for anything else; in other words, we care only for the clear sky with the throne above it.

X. The throne in the heavens is transmitted to the earth through and with the living creatures (Ezek. 1:5, 26):

- A. Wherever they are, the throne is there, and wherever they go, the throne follows them.
- B. In this way the throne in the heavens becomes one with the earth, for the throne is transmitted to the earth (Matt. 6:10; 16:19; 18:18).
- C. This needs to be the situation among the local churches today, the situation among the overcomers, and the situation and condition of our daily Christian life.

« WEEK 7 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:22 And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

1 John 1:3 ...That you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...

Ezekiel 1:22-25 is very profound and deep. These verses tell us that upon the heads of the four living creatures there is the firmament, or the expanse, which we call the sky. The appearance of the sky is like awesome crystal.

[Ezekiel 1:22] reveals that after we have experienced all the things in the first twenty-one verses, the sky over our heads will be crystal clear. It will be like a great expanse of crystal. We will have a wide, clear expanse above us. This means that above us is an open, clear heaven.

The sky is not only clear; it is also expanding. It is not just a matter of having a clear sky vertically, from heaven to earth, but also a matter of having a clear sky horizontally. This means that the clear sky is expanding. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 101-102)

Today's Reading

Before we were saved, our sky was dark and cloudy, even foggy. It was also narrow, without any expanse. With us there was hardly any heaven, hardly any sky. But one day we repented, confessed our sins, and received the Lord Jesus as our Savior....After we made a thorough confession, we had the sense, for the first time, that the sky above us was clear...[and also] expanding.

Later, however, some problems might have arisen with ourselves personally, with our relatives, with the church, or with some of the brothers and sisters. Immediately our sky became somewhat cloudy again. It was not as cloudy and dark as before we were saved, but still it was no longer clear. Clouds and fog reappeared. We all have had this kind of experience. Eventually, we confessed our failures, condemned such things as our attitudes, motives, intentions, and goals, and received God's forgiveness and the cleansing of the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:9, 7). The sky above us became clear again, and once again we were under a clear sky. Then the sky began to open and expand above us. In our experience we should always have a clear, open, and expanding heaven.

The kind of sky a Christian has depends upon his conscience. Your conscience is connected to your sky. If there is no blemish on your conscience, your sky will be clear. If your sky is not clear, this means that there is some offense on your conscience. In order to have a clear sky, we need to deal with any offense and condemnation in our conscience. The story of our sky is the story of our conscience.

When we as living creatures reach the point of having a clear, open, and expanding heaven, there will be nothing between us and God and nothing between us and one another. There will be nothing cloudy or foggy covering us or separating us from one another. All the clouds, coverings, separations, and fog will be gone, and we will have a sky that is thoroughly clear and continually expanding. Our expanse will be as clear as crystal. When others look upon our clear sky, they will be astonished. Our sky is awesome because it is crystal clear and expanding.

This clear and expanding sky is also stable. As a rule, the sky above the earth usually has some kind of movement. Either the clouds are moving or the wind is blowing. But the sky above the living creatures is not moving; rather, it is as stable as crystal. There is no change,...no fluctuation. The heaven above them is clear, expanding, and stable. They have a thorough fellowship with the Lord vertically and also a clear fellowship among themselves horizontally. They have a wide and stable span of fellowship.

If a local church is proper, the sky over it will be clear and broad [rather than cloudy and narrow]. No matter what you say, no one will be offended. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 103-104)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 10

« WEEK 7 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:23-24 And under the expanse one pair of their wings went straight out, one toward the other; each had another pair covering their bodies on this side and on that side. And I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, as they went; it was the sound of a tumult, like the sound of an army...

Under this sky, [this expanse], the living creatures stretch their two wings straight....Two of the wings of each of the living creatures are stretched forth and joined to the wings of others. The living creatures use their other two wings to cover their body. Whenever they move and whenever they act, a voice, or a sound, comes from their wings. This voice is like the “sound of great waters” and also like “the voice of the Almighty” (Ezek. 1:24), that is, the almighty God. It is also like the sound of a tumult, the voice of a host or army. Furthermore, when the living creatures stop and stand still, they lower their wings (v. 25). We need to consider the spiritual significance and application of all these matters. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 101)

Today's Reading

If we are under a clear and expanding sky, we can have the adequate and proper coordination, a coordination that is altogether straight. In the first chapter of Ezekiel, the word straight is used a few times. In verse 7 it is used for the calf's foot. In verse 23 it is used for the eagle's wings....This indicates that in our coordination we must be straight.

Sometimes the coordination in the local churches is not straight but is somewhat crooked....We should never play politics in the church life. If we say something to one brother, we should be able to say it to others as well. This means that our wings must be straight. Our coordination must be frank, sincere, earnest, and straight.

As the living creatures moved, Ezekiel heard the voice [sound] of their wings (v. 24a). This means that as they moved in a straight coordination, a voice came out. This voice was their testimony. From this we see that the voice of the testimony of any local church must come out of the proper coordination. It should not be the voice of an individual believer; it should be the voice of the coordination.

Consider the situation with Peter....Before the day of Pentecost, Peter often voiced something by himself,...[but when] Peter stood up with the eleven (Acts 2:14),...I believe that...they were like the four living creatures in Ezekiel 1. The voice which came out on the day of Pentecost was not the voice of an individual Peter but the voice of a corporate body.

On the one hand, the four living creatures stretched two of their wings for coordination, for moving, and for giving the voice. On the other hand, they used the other two wings to cover themselves. This indicates that in the church life, in the coordination, we all need to learn to hide ourselves under the Lord's grace....Hide under the eagle's wings. There should be no manifestation of the self or of any individual. No matter how great our portion may be, we need to hide ourselves under the Lord's grace. We should never boast in ourselves but always boast in Him.

If the situation of a local church is like that of the four living creatures described above, that church will be qualified and adequate to sound out the voice and to give a strong testimony. The voice will not be that of an individual person but will be like the sound of great waters....Ezekiel 1:24 says also that this voice is the voice of the Almighty. It becomes the voice of God Himself. It is the voice of a corporate body, but eventually this voice becomes the voice of God. How marvelous!

The testimony of a local church should be like this. The voice in your local church should be the voice not of any individual but the voice of the Almighty.

Eventually, as verse 24 says, the voice is the voice of a fighting army...fighting the battle for God's economy. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 105-108)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 10

« WEEK 7 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:24-25 ...Whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. And there was a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads. When they stood still, they dropped their wings.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

[In Ezekiel 1:24b] we see that the living creatures do not move all the time. Sometimes they stop and stand still. When they stand still, they let down their wings, lowering them. When they hear a voice not out of their wings but out of the clear sky above their heads, they stop and let down their wings. This indicates that they know how to listen to God's voice. They know not only how to speak and sound forth their voice but also how to listen to God's voice. Whenever they listen to God's voice, they stop moving, stand still, and lower their wings. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 108)

Today's Reading

If we have a sky that is crystal clear, expanding, and stable, there will be a twofold result. On the one hand, having a clear sky enables us to speak; on the other hand, it enables us to listen. We speak to others, and we listen to God. This means that we should be a Christian who both speaks for God and listens to God's speaking. If our condition is like that of the living creatures in Ezekiel 1, our sky will be clear, and then we will be able to speak for God and also to hear God's speaking. The ability to speak and to hear depends upon having a clear sky.

A clear sky, speaking for the Lord, and listening to the Lord are all matters of fellowship. Genuine fellowship is related to genuine coordination. When we have fellowship with God and with one another, there will be a genuine coordination among us. Then as we move we can speak for God, and when God comes to speak to us, we can listen quietly to His speaking. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 108-109)

Both God's forgiveness and God's cleansing are needed for the restoration of our broken fellowship with God, that we may enjoy Him in uninterrupted fellowship. (1 John 1:9, footnote 4)

This should be the situation in all the local churches. A proper local church knows both how to move and how to stop, how to sound forth its voice and how to listen to God's voice. Is your local church like this? I am concerned that your church may not know how to stop, lower its wings, and listen to the voice from the sky. I am also concerned that in your local church there may not be the proper coordination. Instead, there may be a one-man show, with one person doing everything and insisting that everything and everyone be under his control. Any local church that is like this will be poor and weak. No matter what such a church may claim to have, there is no voice coming from the wings. The coordination of the four living creatures, on the contrary, is not a one-man show. One person does not decide everything. Their coordination is a coordination of all the living creatures.

Ezekiel 1 presents the clearest picture in the Bible concerning the proper church life, and we all need to see the church life as it is portrayed in this chapter. The coordination shown here is marvelous. All the experiences in a wonderful sequence bring the living creatures to a point where they are under a crystal-clear, expanding, and stable heaven. Therefore, the living creatures have a proper move on earth and give a proper voice and testimony to the whole universe. Here they learn how to stop and listen to God's voice. They know how to give the voice by moving and know how to listen to God's voice by stopping.

We all, especially the leading ones in the local churches, need to see this picture and experience what is unveiled in it. May the Lord be merciful to us and cause all the local churches to be brought into the experiences depicted in this chapter. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 109)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 10

« WEEK 7 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting.

5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

In Revelation the throne of God is the center of God's administration. In the Epistles the throne is the throne of grace, from which we receive mercy and find grace (Heb. 4:16). In Revelation the throne is the throne of judgment, from which the world receives judgment. Eventually, after all God's judgments have been executed, the throne of God will be the throne of the supply of eternal life, out of which will proceed the living water of life, in which the tree of life grows, as the supply of God's redeemed in eternity. (Rev. 4:2, footnote 2)

In Revelation 4 is the scene in the heavens, its center being the throne of God, on which God sits, ready to execute His universal administration for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose....In chapter 5 is the same scene in the heavens after Christ ascended there. He was recommended to the apostle John as the Lion of the tribe of Judah by one of the elders, but He appeared to John as a Lamb. As the Lion, He is the Fighter against the enemy; as the Lamb, He is the Redeemer for us. He fought to redeem us, and He won the battle over the enemy and accomplished redemption for us. To the enemy He is a Lion; to us He is a Lamb. Hence, He is the Lion- Lamb. (Rev. 5:6, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

Whenever we have such a clear sky in our Christian life and in our church life, we will also have the throne, which is above the clear sky (Ezek. 1:26). The throne is the center of the universe, and it is where the Lord is. We often talk about the Lord's presence, but we need to realize that the Lord's presence is always with the throne. Where the Lord is, there His throne is. His presence can never be separated from His throne. The Lord's throne is in the third heaven, but His throne is also in our spirit. Hence, the Lord's throne is with us all the time.

As Christians and as local churches, we all should be under a crystal clear and expansive sky. Above this clear, expansive sky is the throne of the Lord. By having such a clear sky, we are spontaneously under the government of the Lord's throne.

We should always be under the ruling of the Lord's throne. Because we are under the throne, we do not need policemen and law courts to rule over us. If we need to be ruled by the police and by the courts, this means that we are not under the throne.

We should be under the throne of the Lord all the time. Perhaps we want to say a certain thing, but the ruling of the throne does not allow us to speak a word. As we begin to speak, the throne exercises its ruling, and we are forced to swallow our words. At other times, we may become angry and may be close to losing our temper, but we realize that we are under the ruling of the throne, and we are subdued. Who is ruling over us? We are ruled not merely by the teachings of the Bible but by the throne.

In our Christian life and in our church life, if the sky is clear, the throne will be there. But if our sky is cloudy and darkened, we will not see the throne. When we do not see the throne, we can be loose and do many things according to our taste and convenience....Whenever believers are in darkness and thus are not under the throne, they can be quite loose, speaking what they want to speak, expressing what they want to express, and going where they want to go. But a person who is under the throne has no liberty to behave in such a way.

In a sense, because we have been saved, we are liberated, but in another sense we are under the throne and have no liberty at all....Praise the Lord for the clear sky and for the throne! (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 112-114)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 11

« WEEK 7 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

The four living creatures are not only for the manifestation of the Lord and not only for the move of the Lord but also for the administration, the government, of the Lord. The Lord is among them and above them for His manifestation, move, and government. In such a situation God is not only the God of heaven but also the God of the earth (see footnote 3 on Matthew 11:25). Through the living creatures the heavens are open to the earth and are joined to the earth.

The Lord's presence is always with His throne. The Lord's throne is both in the third heaven and in our spirit (Rev. 4:2-3; Heb. 4:16 and note 1; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22). The throne above the crystal clear expanse indicates that whenever we have a "clear sky" in our Christian life and in our church life, we will be under the ruling of the throne. The highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with a throne above it. To reach this point means that in everything we allow God to have the preeminence and are completely submissive to God's authority and administration. (Ezek. 1:26, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

We Christians need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord. This means that we need always to have a clear fellowship with Him. We should have nothing between us and the Lord. When there is nothing between us and the Lord, our sky will be crystal clear, and our conscience will be pure, void of any offense (Acts 24:16).

The highest step in the spiritual experience of a Christian is to have the throne in our firmament, in our clear sky. To have the throne, or to arrive at the throne, is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life. For God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us. Therefore, to reach the throne in our spiritual experience means that in everything we are completely submissive to God's authority and administration. Then we are no longer a person without the throne, without authority, without government.

A believer who does not have a clear sky with a throne above it can easily be loose and careless in his daily living. On the contrary, a believer who has a sky that is crystal clear has the sense of being under divine government and restraint; therefore, he cannot be loose or careless in anything he says or does. A believer who has a clear sky above him is under an authority which restricts and restrains him in things such as speaking or a display of anger. This authority is a matter of the throne.

The clearer our sky is, the more we are under the throne. The more we have clear fellowship with the Lord, the more we will be under His authority. We need to ask ourselves if there is a throne in our Christian life. If we have the throne above the clear sky, we are greatly blessed, and we should worship God for this blessing.

The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for God to accomplish His eternal purpose. If we have a throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us. Those who do not have the throne in their Christian life will not allow God to obtain His purpose with them. I hope that the Holy Spirit will deeply impress you with this matter. If you want God's purpose and plan to be carried out in you and with you, you must be a person who submits to the throne. You must be a person under the reign of God. Only then can God carry out His purpose in relation to you. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 111, 114-115)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 11

« WEEK 7 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

Exo. 24:10 And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness.

The living creatures are still on earth, moving or standing, but above their heads there is a clear heaven with the throne. From what is portrayed in Ezekiel 1 we can see that the throne in the heavens is transmitted to the earth through and with the living creatures. With them and through them the heavens with the throne are opened up to the earth. In this way the throne in the heavens becomes one with the earth, for the throne is transmitted to the earth....We may say that the living creatures in Ezekiel 1 are the heavenly electrical lines. It is through them, by them, and with them that the heavenly throne is transmitted to the earth. Wherever they are, there is the throne. Wherever they go, the throne follows them. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 115-116)

Today's Reading

In the church there is no human, [natural] authority. The authority in the church is the throne above the clear sky.

As long as we are under a clear sky with a throne above it, there is no need for us to claim to have authority—the authority is simply there. We should never try to bring others under our authority. Such a thing is a hierarchy; it is something of organization. We should not try to rule over the saints. Instead, we should humble ourselves and remain under the throne in the clear sky....The only authority is the throne above a clear sky.

I can assure you that if we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, the genuine authority will be with us. No opposition or persecution will be able to defeat us or shake us because heaven and the throne are with us. If the sky above us is clear and the throne is with us, we will have the authority and the weight.

The weight of a person before God is equal to the degree of that person's subjection to God's authority....[A] brother is weighty because he has learned to subject himself to God's authority. The more we submit to the throne, the weightier we will be.

[In Ezekiel 1:26] we see that the throne has the appearance of a sapphire stone. Exodus 24:10 is helpful in understanding the significance of the sapphire stone in Ezekiel 1. Exodus 24:10 says, "They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness." A sapphire stone signifies a kind of heavenly condition which exists when God is present in a particular situation. According to Exodus 24:10 when Moses, Aaron, and the chief men of Israel saw God, they saw under His feet the appearance of a paved work of sapphire. This gave the people an insight into the appearance of the Lord's presence. A sapphire stone is blue in color, and blue is a heavenly color indicating the situation and condition of God's presence. This verse also says that at that time the heavens were exceedingly clear. God was present in that kind of situation and atmosphere. Therefore, the sapphire stone signifies the situation or the condition of the heavens with God's presence in it. The throne being in the likeness of a sapphire stone shows the presence of God in a heavenly situation.

[In Ezekiel 1] the Lord is upon the throne above the expanse in the heavens, and the living creatures are walking or standing on earth. Through them the Lord in the heavens becomes one with the earth, and in this way the heavens are connected to the earth. This means that the heavens have been brought down to the earth and that the heavens are now moving on earth through, by, and with the living creatures. This needs to be the situation among the local churches today, the situation among the overcomers, and the situation and condition of our daily Christian life. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 116-117, 120-121)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 11

Hymns, #941

God's kingdom is God's reigning

The Kingdom — Its Meaning

941

1. God's king - dom is God's reign - ing, His glo - ry to main - tain; It
is His sov - ereign rul - ing, His or - der to sus - tain. He
ex - er - cis - es ful - ly His own auth - or - i - ty With -
in His king - dom ev - er And to e - ter - ni - ty.

2. Upon the throne, the center
Of government divine,
God reigns, and with His purpose
Brings everything in line.
God's headship and His lordship
He only can maintain
As King within His kingdom,
O'er everything to reign.
3. By reigning in His kingdom
God worketh all His will,
And under His dominion
His purpose doth fulfill.
'Tis only in God's kingdom
His blessing we may know;
'Tis from His throne almighty
The stream of life doth flow.
4. Submitted to God's ruling,
All virtue thus will win;
Rebellion to His Headship
Is but the root of sin.
The evil aim of Satan—
God's throne to overthrow;
Our aim and goal is ever
His rule to fully know.
5. Within God's sovereign kingdom
His Christ is magnified;
When Christ in life is reigning,
The Father's glorified.
When God is in dominion,
All things are truly blessed;
When Christ for God is reigning.
God's glory is expressed.
6. In fulness of the seasons
God's Christ will head up all.
Then all will own His reigning
And worship, great and small.
Such reign in life and glory
The Church e'en now foretastes
And to His rule submitting
Unto His kingdom hastes.

WEEK 8 —OUTLINE

The Man on the Throne

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:26-27; Gen. 1:26; Acts 7:56; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 2:9; 6:20; Rev. 3:21; Rom. 5:17, 21

<< DAY 1 >>

I. In the Bible there is a mysterious thought concerning the relationship between God and man (Gen. 1:26; 1 John 3:2b; Rev. 4:3a; 21:11b):

- A. The Bible reveals the resemblances between God and man in their images and likenesses (Gen. 1:26; 18:2-13; Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 7:56; Rom. 5:14; 8:29; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2b; Rev. 4:3a; 21:11b).
- B. Man was not created according to his own kind; God created man according to God's kind (Gen. 1:26-27).
- C. God became a man to produce God-man kind; as believers in Christ, we are God-man kind, God-men (John 1:1, 12-14; 12:24).
- D. God's desire is to become the same as man is and to make man the same as He is (1 John 3:2b):
 - 1. God's intention is to work Himself in Christ into us, making Himself the same as we are and making us the same as He is (Eph. 3:17a).
 - 2. God's economy is to make Himself man and to make us, His created beings, God, so that He is God "man-ized" and we are man "God-ized."

<< DAY 2 >>

II. In Ezekiel 1:26 the One on the throne has the appearance of a man:

- A. The One sitting on the throne is not only God but also man; He is the God-man, the man-God, the mingling of God and man (Acts 7:56).
- B. There is a twofold significance to the fact that the One sitting on the throne has the appearance of a man:
 - 1. There is a connection between Ezekiel 1:26 and Genesis 1:26:
 - a. God created man in His image to express Him and with His authority to represent Him; this was according to His purpose (vv. 26-27; Eph. 3:11).
 - b. God's purpose in creating man in His image and according to His likeness was that man would receive Him as life and express Him (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9).
 - c. God's intention in giving man dominion is to subdue God's enemy, Satan, to recover the earth, and to bring the kingdom of God to the earth (1:26, 28; Matt. 6:10, 13).

2.Through incarnation God became a man; He lived, died, resurrected, and ascended as a man; and now as the One on the throne He is still a man (John 6:62; Acts 7:56).

C.The appearance of the man on the throne has two aspects; His upper part, from the loins upward, looks like electrum, and His lower part, from the loins downward, looks like fire (Ezek. 1:27):

1.The upper part signifies His nature and disposition; according to His nature and disposition, the One on the throne looks like electrum.

2.The lower part is for moving; the appearance of fire from the loins downward signifies the Lord's appearance in His move.

« DAY 3 »

III. Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Lord Jesus was brought to the throne (Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9):

A.God has always been the Lord, but now a man is on the throne as the Lord (Rev. 4:2-3; 5:6).

B.After the Lord Jesus was crucified and buried, God resurrected Him and set Him at His right hand, making Him the Lord of all the universe (Phil. 2:9-11):

1.As God, the Lord was the Lord all the time (Luke 1:43; John 11:21; 20:28), but as man, He was made the Lord in His ascension after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection; in His ascension He was made the Lord of all to possess all (Acts 2:33, 36; 3:15; 10:36).

2.The God-exalted Jesus, the Ruler of the kings of the earth, is the Ruler over all the ones who are in power; He is the chief Ruler in the divine government for the fulfillment of God's eternal plan (Rev. 1:5).

C.As the Pioneer and Forerunner, the Lord Jesus cut the path to the throne and led the way to the throne (Heb. 6:20; 2:10):

1.He became a man, and as a man, He went to the throne (Rev. 3:21).

2.This indicates that He is not the only man destined for the throne; rather, He has cut the path so that we may follow.

3.God intends to bring us into glory and to set us on the throne (22:3-5).

« DAY 4 »

IV. God's intention is to work on man in order that man can be on the throne (Psa. 8:4-8; Rev. 3:21):

A.God's mind is on man; He wants man to express Him and to exercise His authority (Psa. 8:4, 6; Gen. 1:26).

B.God desires to manifest Himself through man and to reign through man.

C. God's goal is to bring us to the throne; His desire is to make us people of the throne:

1. God will not be satisfied until we are on the throne; He cannot receive the full glory until we are brought to the throne (Rev. 22:3-5).
2. God's kingdom cannot come in full until we are on the throne.
3. God's enemy will not be subdued until we are on the throne.

D. God desires to bring us to the throne because of the rebellion of Satan against God's throne (Isa. 14:12-14):

1. The greatest difficulty God faces in the universe is that His throne has been opposed and attacked by rebel forces.
2. In his rebellion against God's throne, Satan intended to exalt his throne and thereby to intrude upon God's authority.
3. From the time of Satan's rebellion until now, there has been a dispute regarding authority; much of what is happening on earth today is an expression of Satan's resistance to God's throne.
4. God's intention is to cast Satan down and to redeem many of those taken captive by Satan and to bring them to His throne (Rev. 3:21).
5. There needs to be a people who have been gained by God so that through them the authority of God can be executed and the kingdom of God can come to the earth (11:15; 12:10).

« DAY 5 »

6. We should desire to reign—to exercise authority for God—and to enjoy the blessing of reigning for God (20:4, 6).

E. The overcomers will be on the throne with Christ as His co-kings (3:21):

1. Christ is on the throne, and they also will be on the throne.
2. Christ has all the authority, and the overcomers will share in this authority to rule over the nations (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 2:26-27).

V. In order to be brought to the throne, we need to experience the humanity of Jesus with its virtues and to reign in life (Eph. 4:1-2, 20; Matt. 11:29; Rom. 5:17, 21):

A. If we would have the proper human virtues, we need the humanity of Jesus (Eph. 4:1-2):

1. As believers, we have Christ with all His human virtues dwelling in us to be our humanity (Col. 1:27):
 - a. Every aspect of our daily walk should conform to the Lord's humanity in our spirit (Rom. 8:4).
 - b. As we live under the Lord's ruling and experience Christ's humanity, we will

never be out of balance; rather, everything will be properly proportioned.

2. We need to eat Christ as the meal offering to become the reproduction of Christ and to live the life of a God-man (Lev. 2:9-10; 6:14-18; Luke 22:19; John 6:57; 1 Cor. 10:17).

« DAY 6 »

B. God's complete salvation is for us to reign in life by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17, 21):

1. We have been regenerated with a divine, spiritual, heavenly, kingly, and royal life; this life enables us to reign as kings (John 3:3-6).

2. In practice, to reign in life is to be under the ruling of the divine life:

a. Christ is a pattern of reigning in life by being under the ruling of the divine life of the Father (Matt. 8:9; John 18:11; Phil. 2:8).

b. When we are under the ruling of the divine life, we have the sense that we are enthroned as kings to reign over all things (Rom. 5:17).

3. To reign in life is to conquer, subdue, and rule over Satan, the world, sin, the flesh, ourselves, all kinds of insubordination, and all the environmental circumstances (8:35, 37).

4. If we would reign in life, we need to continually receive the abundance of grace, the fullness of the enjoyment of God (5:17, 21):

a. We need to come again and again to the divine source and open ourselves from the depths of our being to be filled with God as grace (Heb. 4:16).

b. The more we receive the abundance of grace, the more we reign in life (John 1:16; Rom. 5:17, 21).

« WEEK 8 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

In the Bible there is a mysterious thought concerning the relationship between God and man. God's desire is to become the same as man is and to make man the same as He is. This means that God's intention is to mingle Himself with man and thereby make Himself like man and make man like Him. The Lord Jesus is the God-man; He is the complete God and the perfect man. We may also say that He is the Man-God. The One whom we worship today is the Man-God. Furthermore, to be a man of God, as Moses was (Deut. 33:1; Josh. 14:6; Psa. 90, title), is to be a God-man, a man who is mingled with God. It is a delight to God that all His chosen and redeemed people would be God-men. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 124)

Today's Reading

I would like to give a very brief word on the resemblance of God and man in their images and likenesses....In God's creation there was not such a thing as "mankind"...If God did not create "mankind," then after what kind was man created? Genesis 1:26 indicates that man is after God's kind. This verse says, "Let Us [the Divine Trinity] make adam [Heb. adam, denoting red clay] in Our image, according to Our likeness." Hence, what God made here was after His own kind, that is, God-kind.

The choosing God became a man. This God-man, through His death and resurrection, has made a mass reproduction of Himself. He as the one grain became many grains (John 12:24). The many grains are ground into fine flour and blended together to become one loaf (1 Cor. 10:17). The Lord Jesus as the only begotten Son of God was the one grain, and He made us the many grains, His many "twins," His many brothers (Rom. 8:29), to be blended into one loaf, one Body. Among us there is no difference in nationality, race, or social rank (Col. 3:11). We are a new kind, "God-man kind."

We need new terms and expressions to describe matters in our spiritual culture. God-man kind is such an expression. In Christ God and man have become one entity, the God-man. In God's creation there was no mankind; there was only man as God's kind. It was through man's fall that mankind came into existence. Eventually God became a man to have a mass reproduction of Himself and thereby to produce a new kind. This new kind is neither God's kind nor mankind—it is God-man kind. Today as believers in Christ, we are God-man kind; we are God-men. (Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles, pp. 85, 24)

God Himself became a man, and today on the throne He is still a man. People may want to be like God, but God wants to be a man. God's intention is to work Himself into us, making us the same as He is, and even more, making Himself the same as we are. Thus, God's intention is to have a man and to work Himself into man. We need to be deeply impressed with the fact that the Lord is still on the throne as a man. In the book of Ezekiel, the term the son of man is used more than ninety times. This indicates how much God desires to have a man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 124-125)

God's economy and plan is to make Himself man and to make us, His created beings, "God," so that He is "man-ized" and we are "God-ized." In the end, He and we, we and He, all become God-men. Hence, it is not enough for us to be good men, spiritual men, or holy men. These are not what God is after. What God wants today is God-men. God does not expect us to improve ourselves, because God is not after our being good men. He wants us to be God-men. He is our life and everything to us for the purpose that we would express Him and live Him out. (A Deeper Study of the Divine Dispensing, p. 54)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles, msgs. 2, 4

« WEEK 8 —DAY 2 »»

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:26-27 ...Above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it. Then I saw something like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire....There was brightness all around Him.

Acts 7:56 And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

We will go on to consider the One sitting on the throne (Ezek. 1:26-27)....[In verse 26b] we are told that the One on the throne looks like a man. This is absolutely different from the human concept and also different from the religious concept, including the concept widely held in today's Christianity. Mainly, our concept is that the One on the throne is the mighty God. Have you ever thought that the Lord on the throne is not only the mighty God but is also a man? Oh, the One who sits on the throne is a man! However, verse 28 speaks of "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah." The One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him there is the appearance of the glory of the Lord. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 123)

Today's Reading

How precious it is that the One sitting on the throne in Ezekiel 1:26 has the appearance of a man!...There is at least a twofold significance to the fact that the One sitting on the throne here has the appearance of a man. First, there is surely a connection between Ezekiel 1:26 and Genesis 1:26, which says that God created man in His own image and according to His likeness. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 124)

Created man was a duplication of God in God's image and likeness, but he did not have the reality of God or the life of God. Thus, he still needed to receive God as his life by eating of the tree of life so that he might have the reality of God to express Him (Gen. 2:9 and footnote 2). (Gen. 1:26, footnote 3)

God created a corporate man not only to express Himself with His image but also to represent Him by exercising His dominion over all things. God's intention in giving man dominion is (1) to subdue God's enemy, Satan, who rebelled against God; (2) to recover the earth, which was usurped by Satan; and (3) to exercise God's authority over the earth in order that the kingdom of God may come to the earth, the will of God may be done on the earth, and the glory of God may be manifested on the earth (Matt. 6:10, 13b). (Gen. 1:26, footnote 5)

In the incarnation God Himself became a man. Having the nature of man, He lived, died, resurrected, and ascended as a man, and now in heaven He is still the Son of Man (John 6:62; Acts 7:56).

Ezekiel 1:27 says, "Then I saw something like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around, from the appearance of His loins and upward; and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw something like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him." Here we see that the appearance of the man on the throne has two aspects: From His loins upward He looks like electrum, and from His loins downward He looks like fire. Why does His upper part look like electrum, and why does His lower part look like fire? The upper part of a man, from his loins to his head, is the part of feeling, of sensation. This part signifies his nature and disposition. According to His nature and disposition the Lord Jesus on the throne looks like electrum. The lower part of a man's body is for moving. The appearance of fire from the loins downward signifies the Lord's appearance in His move.

When the Lord comes to us, He first comes as fire. When He stays with us, He becomes electrum. Furthermore, whenever the Lord moves through us, He moves like fire to burn, enlighten, and search. After this burning something will remain, and that will be the electrum—a mixture of gold and silver signifying the Lamb-God, the redeeming God. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 124, 129-130)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles, msg. 13; The Vital Groups, msg. 10

« WEEK 8 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

Phil. 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.

Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Lord Jesus was brought to the throne. A real man whose name is Jesus is on the throne. This is why we declare, “Jesus is Lord” and why we call, “O Lord Jesus.” God has always been the Lord, but now a man is on the throne as the Lord. Through His resurrection and in His ascension, “God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus” (Acts 2:36). God has made Jesus, a Nazarene, the Lord, and now today the Lord of heaven and of earth is a man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 129)

Today's Reading

Do you really realize that the Lord of the universe today is a man? Hallelujah for this man! It would not seem strange to us to say that Jehovah Elohim is the Lord of the universe. But it is not easy for us to realize that a man who could be crucified and buried could be the Lord of the universe. When Judas and the multitude came to arrest Him, He did not run away. He willingly made Himself weak and allowed Himself to be arrested and crucified. In the words of 2 Corinthians 13:4, “He was crucified out of weakness.” But after He was crucified and buried, God resurrected Him and set Him at His right hand, making Him the Lord of all the universe. Today, the Lord of the universe is a man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 129)

As God, the Lord was the Lord all the time (Luke 1:43; John 11:21; 20:28). But as man, He was made the Lord in His ascension after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection. And as God's sent and anointed One, He was Christ from the time He was born (Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:16; John 1:41; Matt. 16:16). But as such a One, He was also officially made the very Christ of God in His ascension. The Lord was made Lord, as the Lord of all (Acts 10:36), to possess all; and He was made Christ, as God's Anointed (Heb. 1:9), to carry out God's commission. (Life-study of Acts, p. 81)

In ascension Christ is also the Ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5). As the Ruler of the kings He is far above all earthly rulers. Apparently the earth is ruled by kings and presidents; actually the Lord Jesus rules the whole earth through the earthly authorities. Even all the kings and presidents are under His rule. Today He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16). He is the Ruler of all the ones who are in power. He is the chief Ruler in the divine government for the fulfillment of God's eternal plan. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 338)

We also need to see that the Lord Jesus led the way to the throne. He was the Pioneer, the Forerunner (Heb. 6:20), cutting the path to the throne (2:10). This indicates that He is not the only man destined for the throne. He has cut the path and has taken the lead so that we may follow. He was the first one to the throne, and we will come after Him. Now we are marching to the throne, for God intends to bring us into glory and to set us on the throne.

In Revelation 3:21 the Lord Jesus says, “He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.” The Lord Jesus seemed to be saying that He became a man, and as a man He went to the throne. God's intention is to take us to the throne. His desire is to make us people of the throne. God's kingdom cannot come in full until we are on the throne. Furthermore, God's enemy will not be subdued until we are on the throne. God's goal, therefore, is not merely to deliver us out of hell but to bring us to the throne. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 129, 127)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 123-131; Life-study of Acts, msg. 10

« WEEK 8 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 8:4 What is mortal man, that You remember him, and the son of man, that You visit him?

6 For You have caused Him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet.

God's intention is to work on man in order that man can be on the throne. Have you ever realized that this is His intention? We might be satisfied to go to heaven. This might satisfy us, but it would never satisfy God. God will not be satisfied until we are on the throne. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 126)

Today's Reading

Why does God want to bring us to the throne? God desires to bring us to the throne because of the rebellion of Satan against God's throne (Isa. 14). If we read the Bible carefully, we will see that the greatest difficulty God faces in the universe is that His throne has been opposed and attacked by rebel forces. God's throne is absolute, but one of His creatures has rebelled and seeks to exalt his throne to be equal with that of God. In his rebellion against God's throne, Satan intended to exalt his throne to the heavens and thereby to intrude upon God's authority. Isaiah 14:12-14 says, "How you have fallen from heaven, / O Daystar, son of the dawn!.../ But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne..../ I will make myself like the Most High." From the time of Satan's rebellion until now, there has been a dispute in the universe regarding authority. Much of what is happening on earth is an expression of Satan's resistance to God's throne. The crucial question is this: Who is actually reigning on earth—God or Satan?

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was absolutely submissive to God's authority. To obey the Lord is to be a person under the throne. Because the Lord Jesus obeyed God the Father and submitted to God's authority in an absolute way, after He was resurrected from the dead, God gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18) and exalted Him to the throne. Now the One sitting on the throne is not only God but also man, for this One is the mingling of God and man. Therefore, after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, there has been a man on the throne.

God's mind is on man (Heb. 2:6), and He wants man to express Him and to exercise His authority. Man has God's image and God's dominion with His authority. God desires to manifest Himself through man, and He desires to reign, to administrate, through man.

God's intention is to cast Satan down and to redeem many of those taken captive by Satan and bring them to His throne. God cannot receive the full glory until we are brought to the throne. One day we will be brought to the throne, and then God will be able to boast to Satan. He will triumphantly declare that His chosen ones, who had been taken captive by Satan, have been brought to the throne.

However, we need to realize that in our present condition we are not qualified to be on the throne. Do you look like a king? If you were weighed on the heavenly scales to determine your spiritual weight, how much would you weigh? I am concerned that many of us would weigh hardly anything at all. This is a very serious matter. We have been called to be sons of God, and we are destined to be kings, but we need God to work in us and on us to qualify us for kingship. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 127-128)

A Christian who is up to the standard has not only been delivered from sin, overcome the world, had his flesh dealt with and his natural constitution broken, been filled with the Holy Spirit, and is sitting in the heavenly realm, but even more he is reigning with Christ in all things. Whether in God's work, in the church, at home, or in any encounter in his environment, he can reign and rule over that which God wants him to rule. There must be such people gained by God so that through them the authority of God can be executed, and the kingdom of God can come upon the earth. (The Experience of Life, pp. 346-347)

Further Reading: The Experience of Life, ch. 17; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 414

« WEEK 8 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:1-2 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love.

We must have the desire to reign. This means that we must positively and actively reign for God, ruling over all things.

In eternity all those who are saved will reign as kings forever and ever (Rev. 22:5). At that time we will truly and fully enjoy the blessing of reigning for God. (The Experience of Life, pp. 351-352, 346)

The overcomers will be on the throne with Christ as His co-kings (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21). Christ is on the throne, and they also will be on the throne. He has the authority, and they also will have the same authority to rule over the nations. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4218)

Today's Reading

First Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, and Ephesians 5:3-5 are verses that show us the humanity which is not fit for God's kingdom. I do not even like to mention all these things; they are the negative side of human virtues. These verses mean that if we do not have the proper human virtues, we are finished as far as the kingdom of God is concerned. If we mean business with God to participate in His kingdom, we must have the proper human virtues. It is impossible to have these virtues by ourselves. But thank God that we have One who is the proper, unique man dwelling in our spirit. Such a One with all His proper human virtues is in us to be our humanity.

May the Lord help us to realize how much we need His humanity. We need all the human virtues in order to put Satan to shame. Every bit of our daily walk must conform with the Lord's humanity in our spirit. If the Lord's humanity does not agree with what we are doing, we must say, "Lord, I will never go against Your humanity within me in this matter. I will simply give it up." If we do this, we will all have a proper daily life in the humanity of Jesus. Then we will have a proper church life, and this church life will be God's kingdom on the earth today. This will be a real shame to Satan and a real boast to God.

For God to have a kingdom on the earth among the younger generation, there is the need of a group of people to be redeemed and regenerated in order to take the humanity of Jesus. By this humanity they are balanced in all things. For example, not long ago the neckties were quite narrow. But today they are wider than ever. They look like a big fan. Do you not think that is rather extreme? Of course, outward adjustment will never work, but if we take the humanity of Jesus, I believe that we will not be that extreme. By taking the Lord's humanity, we will never be out of balance. We must be under God's heavenly ruling.

We must realize that the meal offering is mainly for us. Only a handful as a memorial is for God; all the remainder, the major part, is for the priests. "What is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'" (Lev. 2:3). This is the diet of the priests. The priests feed on Christ as the meal offering day by day. We are the priests, so we must eat Christ as the meal offering for our priestly diet.

The Lord Jesus said in John 6:57, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me." If we eat the meal offering, we will live because of this offering. We are what we eat. What we eat eventually becomes our being. If day by day we eat Christ as our meal offering, eventually we will become Christ. "To me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). It is this kind of life that is adequate to serve God in the priesthood.

The more we enjoy Christ as such a diet, the more we will be nourished, qualified, strengthened, and supported to serve God in a priestly way. This is why we need to experience such a Jesus daily. (CWWL, 1971, vol. 2, "Christ as the Reality," pp. 142-143, 140-141, 34)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1971, vol. 2, "Christ as the Reality," chs. 4, 6, 8-9, 15-17

« WEEK 8 —DAY 6 »»

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 5:17 ...Much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The grace of God and the gift in grace of Christ abounded to the many unto justification of life to all men that many would reign in life through Christ [cf. Rom 5:17]....The goal of being justified is to have life and reign in life. We are saved in life to the extent that the life we have received enthrones us as kings to reign over all things. God's complete salvation is for us to reign in life by the abundance of grace—God Himself as our all-sufficient supply for our organic salvation—and of the gift of righteousness—God's judicial redemption applied to us in a practical way. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 3042)

Today's Reading

We are saved in the divine life of Christ, by reigning in the divine life, from all kinds of insubordination. To be saved in life causes us to reign as kings. According to Romans 5:17, those who receive the abundance of grace and the abundance of the gift of righteousness, those who are justified, shall reign in life. A justified person should reign because he has the divine life, a kingly life, with which to reign. Without the kingly life, no one can reign. When we were redeemed by Christ, forgiven of our sins, and washed by the blood of Christ, we were justified. In addition, we were regenerated with a divine, spiritual, heavenly, kingly, and royal life. Thus, we are now able to reign in life as kings. (To Be Saved in the Life of Christ as Revealed in Romans, p. 9)

To reign in life is to be under the ruling of the divine life. If we look at the life of the Lord Jesus as the God-man in His humanity on the earth, He was absolutely under the ruling of the divine life of the Father. Everything He did was under the Father's ruling. As a man, He rejected His natural humanity and lived a human life under the restriction of the divine life of His heavenly Father. By practically being under the ruling of the divine life of the Father, He was reigning in life. This is the pattern we should follow. (Crystallization-study of the Complete Salvation of God in Romans, p. 42)

To reign is to conquer, subdue, and rule over Satan, the world, sin, the flesh, ourselves, and all our environmental circumstances....Instead of waiting for the millennium in order to reign with Christ, we should desire to reign in life as kings today.

Those who receive the abundance of grace are able to reign in life, for life issues out of the abundance of grace. We have received righteousness objectively, but we still need to continually receive the abundance of grace so that we can reign in life subjectively. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 3043, 3042)

In Romans 5:17 Paul speaks of our receiving the abundance of grace. We need to come to the very God who is grace and receive grace again and again until we are filled with grace. Only when we are filled with grace can we experience the reigning of grace. When grace is allowed to fill us, it abounds in us and then reigns in us. The reigning grace always follows the abounding grace.

The only thing that works is to come to the divine source and open ourselves from the depths of our being to be filled with God as grace. In order to be filled, we must ask the Lord to remove all insulation and frustration. We need to pray, "Lord, I am willing for every hindrance to be removed. I want to keep myself directly open to You. Lord, fill me completely with Yourself as grace." Wherever you are, at work, at school, or in your car, stay open to the Lord to be filled with Him as grace. This is what it means to receive the abundance of grace. As you receive grace in this way, you will be filled with grace and eventually grace will overflow from within you. Then you will reign in life by grace over sin, death, and Satan. (Life-study of Romans, pp. 509-510)

Further Reading: Crystallization-study of the Complete Salvation of God in Romans, msgs. 4-6; Salvation in Life in the Book of Romans, ch. 7; Life-study of Romans, msgs. 46-47

« WEEK 8 —HYMN

Hymns, #505

There's a Man in the glory

Experience of Christ — As Life

505

1. There's a Man in the glo - ry Whose Life is for me. He's pure and He's ho - ly, Tri - um - phant and free. He's wise and He's lov - ing How ten - der is He! His Life in the glo - ry, My life must be; His Life in the glo - ry, My life must be.

Chords: Ab, Eb/G, Eb, Ab, Db, Ab/Eb, Eb, Fm, Bb7, Eb, Eb/Bb, Bb7, Eb, Eb7, Ab/C, Ab, Eb7/G, Ab, Bb7, Eb, Eb7, Ab, Db, Ab/Eb, Eb7, Ab, Db, Ab/Eb, Eb7, Ab, Db/Ab, Ab.

2. There's a Man in the glory

Whose Life is for me.

He overcame Satan;

From bondage He's free.

In Life He is reigning;

How kingly is He!

His Life in the glory,

My life must be;

His Life in the glory,

My life must be.

4. There's a Man in the glory

Whose Life is for me.

His peace is abiding;

How patient is He!

He's joyful and radiant,

Expecting to see

His Life in the glory

Lived out in me;

His Life in the glory

Lived out in me.

3. There's a Man in the glory

Whose Life is for me.

In Him is no sickness;

No weakness has He.

He's strong and in vigor,

How buoyant is He!

His Life in the glory

My life may be;

His Life in the glory

My life may be.

WEEK 9 —OUTLINE

The Rainbow—the Consummation of the Experience of the Christian Life and the Church Life

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:28; Gen. 9:13; Rev. 4:2-3; 10:1; 21:19-20

<< DAY 1 >>

I. The rainbow is a sign of God's faithfulness in keeping the covenant (Gen. 9:8-17):

- A. "I set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth" (v. 13):
 - 1. In order to assure mankind that there would never again be a flood to destroy them and the earth, God made a covenant with Noah, with his seed, and with every animal (vv. 9-17).
 - 2. The rainbow is a sign that God is the One who establishes and keeps His covenant; the rainbow declares that God will keep His covenant.
 - 3. The rainbow, a token of God's covenant, signifies God's faithfulness; God's faithfulness is the rainbow (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9):
 - a. God Himself is faithfulness, and He is faithful to His word (1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thes. 5:23-24).
 - b. We have been spared by God's faithfulness, and now we have a rainbow as a sign of God's faithfulness.

<< DAY 2 >>

B. "There was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance" (Rev. 4:3):

- 1. God is the God of life (jasper) and redemption (sardius) (v. 3):
 - a. The rainbow around His throne signifies that He is the covenanting God, the faithful God, who will keep His covenant while executing His judgment upon the earth (v. 3).
 - b. God will keep a part of mankind to be the nations on the new earth for His glory (21:24, 26).
- 2. The rainbow around the throne is like an emerald in appearance (4:3):
 - a. An emerald is a precious stone whose grass-green color signifies the lives on earth.
 - b. This indicates that as God is executing His judgment upon the earth, He will remember His covenant and spare some of the lives on earth, as indicated in

Genesis 9:11.

C. "I saw another strong Angel [Christ] coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head" (Rev. 10:1):

1. The rainbow here indicates that Christ in His judgment upon the earth will keep the covenant that God made with Noah concerning the earth (Gen. 9:8-17).
2. The rainbow indicates also that Christ will execute judgment according to the God who sits on the throne with the rainbow around it, the faithful and covenant-keeping God (Rev. 4:2-3).

« DAY 3 »

II. The experience of the Christian life and of the church life consummates in a rainbow (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3; 10:1; 21:19-20):

A. God's eternal purpose is to work Himself in Christ into us as our life and everything so that we may take Him as our person, live Him, and express Him; this is the desire of God's heart and the focal point of the Bible (Eph. 1:9; 3:11, 16-17a; Phil. 1:20-21a):

1. The central work of God is to build Himself in Christ into us, making us one with Him for His corporate expression (Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a).
2. Eventually, the Triune God and redeemed humanity will be united, mingled, incorporated, and built up as one entity—the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10; 3:12).

B. According to God's plan, the spiritual things revealed in Ezekiel 1 begin with the wind and consummate with the rainbow (vv. 4, 28):

1. As a result of having a clear sky with the throne and of experiencing the man who has the appearance of electrum and a consuming fire, we will have the appearance of a rainbow (vv. 26-28).
2. The rainbow is the brightness around the man who is sitting on the throne; this brightness signifies the splendor and glory around the Lord on the throne (v. 28).

« DAY 4 »

C. A rainbow can be considered as being produced from the combining of three basic colors—blue, red, and yellow:

1. Blue, the color of God's sapphire throne, signifies God's righteousness; red, the color of the sanctifying fire, signifies God's holiness; and yellow, the color of electrum, signifies God's glory (Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 10:3; 6:19, 22; 3:23; 8:18, 21; 1 Cor. 1:30).
2. Righteousness, holiness, and glory are the three divine attributes that keep

sinners away from God (Gen. 3:24):

- a. The sword for killing indicates God's righteousness (cf. Lam. 3:42-43; Rom. 2:5); the flame signifies God's holiness (Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29); and the cherubim signify God's glory (Ezek. 9:3; 10:4; Heb. 9:5).
- b. Because fallen man was unable to fulfill the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, he was not permitted to contact God as the tree of life, until Christ fulfilled these requirements by His all-inclusive death on the cross to open a new and living way for us to enter into the Holy of Holies and partake of Christ as the tree of life (10:19-20; Rev. 22:14).
- 3. The Lord Jesus died on the cross to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, and now, in resurrection, He is our righteousness, holiness, and glory (1 Cor. 1:30):
 - a. Righteousness issues from God for His administration (Psa. 89:14a; 97:2; Isa. 32:1); now, in Christ, we are becoming the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

<< DAY 5 >>

- b. We become holy, even as God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16), by having God in us; we become more holy by being in God; and we become the holiest by being mingled, permeated, and saturated with God (1 Thes. 5:23).
- c. Christ dwells in us as the hope of glory (Col. 1:27), and we are being transformed into His image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18).
- 4. Because we are in Christ, we bear Christ as righteousness, holiness, and glory; in the sight of God we look like righteousness, holiness, and glory, and we have the appearance of a rainbow (1 Cor. 1:30).

<< DAY 6 >>

- 5. The reality of this rainbow must be wrought into us so that, as God's redeemed ones, we will have the appearance of a rainbow, bearing God's testimony; this means that we will bear God's righteousness, holiness, and glory (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:2-3; 10:1; 21:19-20).
- 6. Although this rainbow will be fully manifested in eternity, the spiritual reality of this bright rainbow should be manifested in the church today (1 Tim. 3:15-16):
 - a. In the church life we need to allow God to work in us, and we need to receive grace to the extent that everything becomes righteous, holy, and glorious (Phil. 2:12-13).
 - b. If we allow God's holy fire to burn away everything that does not match Him so that His holy nature is manifested as gold through our humanity, the

- church will be filled with God's righteousness, holiness, and glory (Eph. 3:21).
- c. This righteousness, holiness, and glory will combine and reflect one another to form a bright rainbow expressing God and testifying for Him.
- D. The New Jerusalem has the appearance of a rainbow; the holy city looks like a rainbow (Rev. 21:19-20):
- 1. The colors of the twelve layers of the foundations have the appearance of a rainbow, surrounding the eternal God as His testimony; this signifies that the entire city is built upon the eternal faithfulness of the faithful God:
 - a. The New Jerusalem is built upon and secured by God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant (4:2-3; 21:19-20).
 - b. In God's economy we need to be constituted with the faithful God to be faithful even as He is faithful (1 Cor. 4:2; 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 2:13).
 - 2. As the New Jerusalem in eternity, we, the aggregate of God's saved ones, will be a rainbow testifying forever that our God is faithful (Rev. 21:2, 10, 19-20):
 - a. By God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, we will have the appearance of a rainbow declaring to the whole universe God's saving faithfulness.
 - b. When this rainbow appears, God will have the fulfillment of the desire of His heart (Eph. 1:9).
 - 3. This eternal rainbow will be the consummation of the experience of the Christian life and the church life (Rev. 4:2-3; 10:1; 21:19-20).

« WEEK 9 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 9:9 And I Myself now establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you.

13 I set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

Around the throne of God is a rainbow (Rev. 4:3b). The rainbow is first mentioned in the Scriptures as a sign that the very God of life and redemption is the One who establishes and keeps His covenant (Gen. 9:12-17). That the covenant in Genesis 9 was made for the sake of the inhabited earth indicates that although God will judge this earth with its inhabitants, He still remembers His covenant concerning the earth and will keep it....The rainbow declares to us that God will keep His covenant for the sake of the earth. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 4: Revelation," p. 466)

Today's Reading

In order to assure mankind that there would never again be a flood to destroy them and the earth, God made a covenant with Noah, with his seed, and with every living animal (Gen. 9:9-17). See footnote 1 on Genesis 8:22 and footnote 1 on Revelation 4:6. (Gen. 9:9, footnote 1)

What is the significance of the rainbow that God set in the cloud as a token of the covenant (Gen. 9:12-17)? It signifies God's faithfulness. God's faithfulness is the rainbow. In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the apostle John saw God sitting upon a throne, and around the throne there was a rainbow (Rev. 4:3). As the closing book of the Bible, Revelation always brings us back to the beginning of the Bible. In the first book of the Bible was a rainbow, and in the last book of the Bible we still find a rainbow. God's faithfulness remains forever. He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). Once He has spoken, He keeps His word. He Himself is faithfulness. First Corinthians 1:9 says, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," and 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God is faithful.

To what is God faithful? He is faithful to what He says. He is faithful to His word, and His word is the testament, the covenant. The covenant is simply God's Word. God is faithful in whatever He says. This is the rainbow. Whenever a cloud comes, you must call God's faithfulness to come. That means that you call out the rainbow. Whenever you feel that you are weak, you must call for God's faithfulness, saying, "O God, You are faithful. I am weak, but You must make me strong according to Your Word." We are all living under the covenant with God's faithfulness as the sure sign that the flood will not come. This is the church life.

Our Christian life and church life are absolutely a covenant life. We are under the covenant. In verse after verse of the New Testament, we find God's promises....There is a verse for every circumstance that you face. If you hold on to God's covenant, I can promise you that, regardless of what happens to you, there is a verse as a living promise for you to rely upon and live by. We all need to learn how to live under God's covenant. We should not be threatened or frightened by the clouds of our convictions, feelings, and environments. We are under God's covenant, fully under His blessing. There is no more condemnation, no more judgment, no more curse. Death has been abolished. In the church, we continually enjoy life. Everything is life. Do not be frightened about losing your job or your health. Do not be threatened by any dark or negative thing. We are the covenanted people, and we have a verse of promise to meet every situation. We must stand under the covenant and not believe in any failure, weakness, darkness, or negative thing. Our destiny is under the blood-sprinkled covenant. Hallelujah, we are the covenant people! (Life-study of Genesis, pp. 436-437)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, pp. 281-286, 431-438

« WEEK 9 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

10:1 And I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire.

In Revelation 4:3 we see that there is “a rainbow around the throne...” The rainbow is a sign of God’s covenant with man and living creatures that He will not destroy them again with the flood (Gen. 9:8-17). In Revelation, God will judge the earth with all its inhabitants. The rainbow around His throne signifies that God is the covenanting God, the faithful God, who will keep His covenant while executing His judgment upon the earth in that He will not judge mankind again with a flood nor destroy all mankind, but will keep some to be the nations of the earth for His glory (Rev. 21:24, 26). This rainbow indicates that God is faithful in His administration toward mankind. In chapter 4, God is about to judge mankind, but in exercising His judgment, He will remember His covenant with Noah. He is the judging God and He is also the covenant-keeping God. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 214)

Today’s Reading

This rainbow is “like an emerald in appearance” [Rev. 4:3]. An emerald is a precious stone having a grass-green color, which signifies the lives on earth. This indicates that while God executes His judgment upon the earth, He will still remember His covenant and spare some of the lives on earth as indicated in Genesis 9:11. An emerald, being a precious stone, is solid. God’s reminder to keep His covenant is solid. There is this solid reminder around the throne.

When John saw the throne set in heaven, he saw that “upon the throne there was One sitting; and He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance...” (Rev. 4:2-3). God on the throne has the appearance of a jasper stone. According to 21:11, jasper is “a most precious stone...clear as crystal.” Its color must be dark green, which signifies life in its richness. Jasper in 4:3, as 21:11 indicates, signifies God’s communicable glory in His rich life (John 17:22, 2). It is the appearance of God, which will also be the appearance of the holy city, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:11). The city’s wall and first foundation are built with it (21:18-19). In the Bible green signifies life. Thus, the color of jasper indicates that the God who is sitting on the throne is the very God of life. God’s color first is green, testifying that He is the source of life.

God on the throne is also in the appearance of a sardius stone. Sardius is a most precious stone, red in color, which signifies redemption. Today, God is not only the God of life, but also the God of redemption. While jasper indicates God as the God of glory in His rich life, sardius signifies God as the God of redemption. Because we, His created ones, fell, He came in to redeem through the blood of Christ. Therefore, He has two colors—the color of life and the color of redemption. He is the life-giving God and also the redeeming God.

Let us now consider the details of Revelation 10:1-11. In this portion of the Word we have a clear vision of Christ coming to take possession of the earth. In this chapter Christ is “another strong Angel,” like the One in 7:2; 8:3; and 18:1.

Revelation 10:1 says that John saw another Angel “coming down out of heaven.” Christ is now coming down out of heaven. This vision is a hint that, before the seventh trumpet, Christ is still on His way to earth.

In this vision Christ has a “rainbow” upon “His head” [v. 1]. Here the rainbow indicates that Christ in His judgment upon the earth and in His coming to take possession of it will keep the covenant God made with Noah concerning the earth (Gen. 9:8-17). It also indicates that He is the One who will execute judgment according to the One sitting on the throne with the rainbow around it. (Life-study of Revelation, pp. 214-217, 308-309)

Further Reading: Life-study of Revelation, msg. 17

« WEEK 9 —DAY 3 »»

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:4 And I looked, and there came a storm wind from the north, a great cloud and a fire flashing incessantly; and there was a brightness around it...

28 Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah...

On the breastplate of the high priest in the Old Testament, the first stone was sardius and the last jasper (Exo. 28:17, 20). This signifies that God's redeemed people have their beginning in God's redemption and their consummation in God's glory of life. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 217)

Today's Reading

God's eternal purpose is to work Himself into us as our life so that we may take Him as our person, live Him, and express Him. This is the desire of God's heart; it is also the focal point of the Bible....God's intention in creating man was that man would receive God into him and take Him as his life and everything to him. For this reason, after God created man, He placed him in front of the tree of life. This indicates that God wanted man to eat of this tree, which is a symbol of God Himself as life. To eat of the tree of life is to take God into us as our life and life supply.

Our destiny in eternity future is to eat the tree of life and thereby to live God and express Him. This is God's eternal intention. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 753)

The entire Scriptures reveal not only the nature and character of God but also His purpose. In fact, the Scriptures may reveal God's purpose more than His character and nature because the entire Bible is a book showing us God's plan; it is a book unveiling the purpose of God....In brief, God's eternal purpose and intention are to have a group of living persons mingled with Himself as one to be His living, corporate expression. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 1: The Gospels and the Acts," p. 145)

The main content of the New Testament is that the Triune God has an eternal economy according to His good pleasure to dispense Himself in His life and nature into His chosen and redeemed people, thereby making them His duplication so that they may express Him; this corporate expression will consummate in the New Jerusalem (Eph. 3:9; 1:9-23). The New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of the Bible, involves God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead (Rev. 21:2; 3:12). In Christ, God has become man to make man God in His life and in His nature so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be mingled, constituted, together to be one entity—the New Jerusalem (21:3, 22). Eventually, the triune, eternal God becomes the New Jerusalem incorporated with all of us, and we also become the New Jerusalem through the process of God's organic salvation (Rom. 5:10). The ultimate consummation of God's organic salvation is the New Jerusalem—the universal incorporation of the union and mingling of God with man, divinity with humanity—the processed and consummated Triune God incorporated with His regenerated, renewed, sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite elect. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4361)

In the vision in Ezekiel 1 things in the natural realm are used to describe things in the spiritual realm. These spiritual things are deep, but we can understand them through the natural and physical things that are used to describe them. According to God's plan the spiritual things revealed here begin with the wind (v. 4) and end with the rainbow (v. 28).

As a result of having a clear sky with the throne and of experiencing a man who has the appearance of electrum and a consuming fire, we will have the appearance of a rainbow....A rainbow is the brightness around the man who is sitting on the throne. This brightness signifies the splendor and glory around the Lord on the throne. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 111, 131)

Further Reading: Life-study of Revelation, msg. 26

« WEEK 9 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 3:24 So He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

1 Cor. 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

In His judgment and destruction of the fallen human race at the time of Noah, God spared some by His faithfulness. This also is our situation as believers in Christ....We all are fallen and deserve to be destroyed, but God has spared us. Praise the Lord that we have been spared by His faithfulness! Now we have a rainbow as a sign of God's faithfulness. Although God is a holy God and a consuming fire and none can exist in His presence, by His faithfulness we have been spared. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 132)

Today's Reading

It is very significant that the three primary colors of the rainbow are red, yellow, and blue because they correspond to what we have already seen in Ezekiel. The throne looks like a blue sapphire stone; the electrum is yellow; the fire is red. By their shining and refracting, these three colors combine to make a rainbow.

Blue signifies the throne. According to Psalm 89:14 the foundation of God's throne is righteousness. This indicates that the blue throne signifies the righteousness of God. Fire signifies the sanctifying, separating, and consuming fire. This means that red here refers to God's holiness. Yellow signifies God's glory in the glowing electrum. Therefore, here we have God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, signified by the colors blue, red, and yellow. God's righteousness, holiness, and glory are three divine attributes that keep sinners away from God. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 132)

God closed the way to the tree of life by means of three items: the cherubim, the flame, and the sword. Cherubim signify God's glory (cf. Ezek. 9:3; 10:4; Heb. 9:5), the flame signifies God's holiness (Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29), and the sword for killing indicates God's righteousness (cf. Lam. 3:42-43; Rom. 2:5). These attributes of God placed requirements on sinful man. Since sinful man was unable to meet these requirements (Rom. 3:10-18, 23), he was not permitted to contact God as the tree of life, until Christ fulfilled the requirements of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness by His all-inclusive death on the cross to open a new and living way for us to enter the Holy of Holies and partake of the tree of life. (Gen. 3:24, footnote 1)

The Lord Jesus came, died on the cross to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, and was resurrected, and He is now our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). He is also now our glory.

We need to experience Christ in such a way that when others contact us, they can sense righteousness, holiness, and glory. This means that they should be able to sense that we have a clear sky, that we have a throne, and that we are righteous and proper, not careless or loose in any way. We should also have the electrum, glowing, shining, and weighty. Then we will have the appearance of a rainbow....As those who were fallen but who have now been saved, we have become a testimony of God's faithfulness in saving us. Every local church should bear the testimony of such a rainbow. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 132-133)

Righteousness issues from God for His administration (Psa. 89:14; 97:2; Isa. 32:1). [In 2 Corinthians 5:21] this righteousness is Christ to be our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30), making us God's righteousness in Him (not making us righteous before God). Through Christ's redemption, man, who is a sinner and is even sin, is made God's righteousness, being reconciled to the righteous God, and is made a new creation living to God for His eternal purpose. The apostles are commissioned to minister such a Christ, with all the glorious issues of His marvelous achievement, to His believers, who are the members that form His Body. Praise and glory be to Him forever! (2 Cor. 5:21, footnote 3)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Corinthians, msgs. 13-14

« WEEK 9 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

1 Thes. 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Col. 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

In the Bible the word holy should not be understood according to the natural concept....Holiness is neither sinlessness nor perfection. Holy not only means sanctified, separated unto God, but also different, distinct, from everything that is common. Only God is different, distinct, from all things in His nature. Hence, He is holy; holiness is the distinct quality of His nature, as one of His attributes.

The way God makes us holy is to impart Himself, the Holy One, into us so that our whole being may be permeated and saturated with His holy nature. For us, God's chosen ones, to be holy is to partake of His nature (2 Pet. 1:4) and to have our whole being permeated with God Himself....This makes our being holy, like God Himself is in His nature. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 86)

Today's Reading

To be holy is to be separated unto God from everything other than God. It also means to be different, distinct, from all that is not God. Thus, we become not common but different. In the universe God alone is holy. He is different from everything and is distinct. Therefore, to be holy means to be one with God in His distinction. You may be sinless and perfect, but if you are not one with God, you are not holy. When God gets into us, we are holy. When we get into God, we are more holy. And when we are mingled with God, we are most holy. We become holy by having God in us, we become more holy by being in God, and we become the holiest by being mingled, permeated, and saturated with God. This will eventually issue in the New Jerusalem, which is called the holy city (Rev. 21:2, 10), a city that not only belongs to God and is for God, but is filled with God, saturated with God, and one with God, a holy entity sanctified with God.

Another attribute of God is righteousness. God is righteous as well as holy. Whereas holiness is related to God's inward nature, righteousness is related to God's outward acts, ways, actions, and activities. Everything God does is righteous.

The righteousness of God is what God is in His action with respect to justice and righteousness. God is just and right. Whatever God is in His justice and righteousness constitutes His righteousness. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 86-87)

Christ, who dwells in our spirit to be our life and person, is our hope of glory. When He comes, we will be glorified in Him. This indicates that the indwelling Christ will saturate our entire being that our physical body may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). (Col. 1:27, footnote 3)

Christ is the mystery that is full of glory now. This glory will be manifested to its fullest extent when Christ returns to glorify His saints (Rom. 8:30). Hence, it is a hope, the hope of glory. Christ Himself is also this hope of glory. (Col. 1:27, footnote 5)

["Image" in 2 Corinthians 3:18 is] the image of the resurrected and glorified Christ. To be transformed into the same image is to be conformed to the resurrected and glorified Christ, to be made the same as He is (Rom. 8:29). (2 Cor. 3:18, footnote 8)

[It is] from one degree of glory to another. This indicates an ongoing process in life in resurrection. (2 Cor. 3:18, footnote 9)

In ourselves we are short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23), we are under God's righteous judgment, and we are kept away by God's holiness. But now, as believers, we are in Christ, and He has become our righteousness, holiness, and glory. Moreover, because we are in Christ, we even bear Christ as righteousness, holiness, and glory. Because we are in Christ, in the sight of God we look like righteousness, holiness, and glory. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 132-133)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 85-91, 95-96, 111-112; The Building Work of God, ch. 9

« WEEK 9 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 21:19-20 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

Even the New Jerusalem has the appearance of a rainbow. The foundation stones of the New Jerusalem are of twelve layers, with each layer being a different color (Rev. 21:19-20). Some time ago I read an article which stated that the twelve layers of the foundation stones have the appearance of a rainbow in color...This rainbow signifies that the city is built upon and secured by God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant. This rainbow will declare for eternity that when God judged sinners according to His righteousness, He did not destroy everyone but saved many from destruction as a testimony of His faithfulness. In eternity we, the aggregate of the saved ones, will be a rainbow testifying forever that our God is righteous and faithful. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 133)

Today's Reading

We, God's spared ones, will be this holy city. By His righteousness, holiness, and glory, we will have the appearance of a rainbow declaring to the whole universe God's saving faithfulness. At the end of the Bible is a city whose foundation has the appearance of a rainbow surrounding the eternal God as His strong testimony. The experience of the Christian life and of the church life will consummate in such a rainbow.

When this rainbow appears, God will have the fulfillment of His heart's desire. Throughout the ages, God has been judging fallen man according to His righteous throne, His holy fire, and His glorious nature. Nevertheless, God has saved some to such an extent that they have become a bright rainbow reflecting His glory and testifying of Him and His faithfulness forever. The appearing of this rainbow indicates that heaven and earth have been connected and that God and man have been joined. Around the throne in the New Jerusalem, there will be a group of people who have received salvation because of God's faithfulness, and for eternity they will be a rainbow reflecting the brightness of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. At this point, God's eternal plan will have been accomplished.

Although this rainbow will be manifested in eternity, the spiritual reality of this bright rainbow should be manifest in the church today. In the church life we need to allow God to work in us, and we need to receive grace to the extent that everything becomes pure, just, and holy. This means that God's holy fire must burn away everything that does not match God so that God's nature is manifested as bright gold in and through the humanity of the brothers and sisters. Then the church will be filled with God's righteousness, holiness, and glory.

This should not be merely a teaching to us. Rather, the reality of this rainbow must be wrought into us so that, as God's spared ones, we will bear the appearance of a rainbow, bearing God's testimony and declaring God's faithfulness to the entire universe. This means that we will bear God's righteousness, holiness, and glory.

Ezekiel said that what he saw was the appearance of the glory of the Lord. "When I saw it, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking" (Ezek. 1:28b). If we want to hear the word of the Lord in the following chapters of Ezekiel, we all need to come to the same point—under a clear sky in front of the throne with a man sitting on it and bearing the shining and reflecting rainbow. This is the place where we can hear the voice from above. Being here positions us to hear the voice speaking from the heavens. I hope that every one of us will come to this point, and I also hope that all the local churches will also be here. Then the Lord will have a way to speak to us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 133-135)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 131-135; Life-study of Revelation, msg. 62; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 429

Hymns, #18

How faithful and trustworthy too

Worship of the Father — His Faithfulness

18

1. How faith - ful and trust - wor - thy too, My Fa - ther God, art Thou; The
un - i - verse and all there - in Thy faith - ful - ness a -
vow. (C) How sted - fast is Thy faith - fulness! For this I wor - ship Thee; It
is es - ta - blished in the heav'n, And ev - er stands for me.

2. No turning shadow could there be,
Nor any change with Thee;
As Thou hast been, and now Thou art,
Forever Thou wilt be.
3. Thy word, as certain as Thyself,
Can never pass away;
Though heav'n and earth shall disappear,
Thy word abides for aye.
4. Thy gifts without repentance are,
Thy calling is the same;
Thy grace forever lasting is,
Thy mercy as Thy name.
5. Thy word with Thine own faithfulness
A surety is to me;
By it, with Thy salvation true,
I have the certainty.
6. If, due to self, I trust Thee not,
Yet Thou art faithful still;
Thou never canst deny Thyself,
Thy word Thou shalt fulfill.
7. As Thou art faithful to perform
Thy promise and Thy call;
So, feeding on Thy faithfulness,
I take Thyself withal.
8. The rainbow round about Thy throne
Thy faithfulness declares;
This attribute forevermore
The holy city bears.

WEEK 10 —OUTLINE

Eating the Scroll—

Eating and Digesting the Word of God

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 2:8—3:3; Jer. 15:16a; Rev. 10:8-10; Matt. 4:4; John 6:63; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; Heb. 5:13-14

« DAY 1 »

I. In Ezekiel 2:8—3:4 the prophet Ezekiel ate the scroll and spoke with God's words, and in Revelation 10:8-11 the apostle John ate the scroll and prophesied:

A. A scroll was spread before Ezekiel, and he was told to eat it and then speak to the house of Israel (Ezek. 2:9—3:1):

1. Ezekiel opened his mouth, and Jehovah gave him that scroll to eat (v. 2).
2. Ezekiel was commanded to feed his stomach and to fill his inward parts with this scroll (v. 3a).
3. After Ezekiel ate the scroll, Jehovah charged him to go to the house of Israel and speak with His words to them (vv. 3b-4).

B. In Revelation 10:8-11 John was told to take the opened scroll that was in the hand of Christ as another Angel (v. 1), devour it, and prophesy over many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings:

1. John not only received the scroll—he devoured it (v. 10).
2. To devour anything is to receive it into one's being.
3. We must receive the divine revelation in this way; both Jeremiah and Ezekiel did this (Jer. 15:16a; Ezek. 2:8; 3:1-3).

II. “Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart” (Jer. 15:16a):

A. According to the entire revelation in the Holy Bible, God's words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them (Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3).

B. God's word is the divine supply as food to nourish us (Matt. 4:4):

1. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being to nourish us that we may be constituted with His element (John 6:63).
2. This is a crucial aspect of God's economy (1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9).

C. When we eat God's words, His word becomes our heart's gladness and joy (Jer. 15:16a).

III. We need to eat the words of the Bible (John 6:63; 1 Pet. 2:2-3; Heb. 5:12-14):

« DAY 2 »

- A. The word of God is not mainly for knowledge but for nourishment (v. 12):
1. Although the Bible is a book of teaching, its teaching is not merely to impart mental knowledge but to minister food to us (Jer. 15:16a).
 2. The words milk and solid food in Hebrews 5:12 indicate that the word of God is for nourishment.
- B. The Lord Jesus took the word of God in the Scriptures as His bread and lived on it (Matt. 4:4).
- C. “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63b):
1. The words of the Lord Jesus are the embodiment of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2).
 2. Christ is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words (1 Cor. 15:45b; John 6:63b).
 3. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we receive the Spirit, who is life.
- D. We need to be nourished with the guileless milk of God’s word (1 Pet. 2:2):
1. The guileless milk is conveyed in the word of God to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind and is assimilated by our mental faculties (Rom. 8:6; cf. Deut. 11:18).

« DAY 3 »

2. Although the nourishing milk of the word is for the soul through the mind, it eventually nourishes the spirit, making us not soulish but spiritual, suitable for being built up as a spiritual house of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15).
 3. In order to enjoy the milk of the word, to taste God with His goodness in the word, we must receive His word by means of all prayer (1 Pet. 2:3; Eph. 6:17-18).
- E. We need to advance from the milk of the word in 1 Peter 2:2 to the word of righteousness as the solid food in Hebrews 5:13-14:
1. Whereas milk is mainly for infants, solid food is for the mature (1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:13-14).
 2. To eat the word of righteousness as the solid food is a strong way to receive, experience, and enjoy Christ.
 3. The word of righteousness embodies the thought of God’s justice and righteousness in His dispensational and governmental dealings with His people (v. 13):
- a. Righteousness is being right with persons, things, and matters before God

according to His righteous and strict requirements (Matt. 5:20).

- b. Righteousness is a matter of God's throne and of being right with God in our being (Psa. 89:14a; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- c. If we would eat the solid food, the word of righteousness, we need experience and exercise (Heb. 5:13-14).

<< DAY 4 >>

IV. The way for the believers to experience the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in their daily living is to eat, digest, and assimilate the Lord Jesus as food by feeding on the word of God (John 6:35, 51-57, 63):

- A. God's economy is that we eat, digest, and assimilate Christ to be constituted with Him in order to express Him and represent Him (1 Tim. 1:4; John 6:35, 51, 57; Gen. 1:26):
 - 1. God's economy is not a matter of outward things but of Christ coming into us inwardly; for this we need to take Christ by eating, digesting, and assimilating Him (Eph. 3:17a; John 6:57b).
 - 2. God's eternal plan is to dispense Himself into us so that He becomes every fiber of our inward being; He wants to be eaten, digested, and assimilated by us so that He can become our constituent (2 Cor. 13:14).
- B. The Triune God becomes our life and life supply by entering into us organically to be assimilated into the fibers of our spiritual being (Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:23).

<< DAY 5 >>

- C. To eat the Lord Jesus is to receive Him into us so that He may be digested and assimilated by the regenerated new man in the way of life; we need to eat, digest, and assimilate Jesus as our spiritual food day by day (John 6:51-57).
- D. We should not only believe into the Lord Jesus and receive Him but also eat Him, digest Him, and assimilate Him, allowing Him to become the content of our being (3:15-16; 6:51-57).

<< DAY 6 >>

- E. As we eat the Lord Jesus, we need to have proper spiritual digestion (Ezek. 2:8—3:3; Jer. 15:16a; Rev. 10:9-10):
 - 1. If we have good digestion, there will be a thoroughfare for the food to get into every part of our inward being (Eph. 3:16-17a).
 - 2. Indigestion means that there is no way for Christ as the spiritual food to get into our inward parts (Heb. 3:12-13, 15; 4:2):

- a. Indigestion means that there is no way for the Lord as the spiritual food to get through in us.
- b. When there is no free course for the food to get into our inward parts, we will have indigestion.
3. We need to keep our whole being, with all our inward parts, open to the Lord so that the spiritual food will have a thoroughfare within us; if we do this, we will have proper digestion and assimilation, we will absorb Christ as spiritual nourishment, and Christ will become our constituent for the expression of God (Eph. 3:16-17a; Col. 3:4, 10-11).
4. By eating we have digesting; by digesting we have assimilation; and by assimilation we get the practical nourishment of the riches of Christ into our being, and these riches grow into our organic tissues (Eph. 3:8).
5. Any believer who receives the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity by eating, digesting, and assimilating the Lord Jesus will live because of Him (John 6:57b).
- F. Because we all partake of Christ as the one bread, we are one Body—the corporate Christ, the Body-Christ—to carry out God’s administration for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12; Eph. 3:11; 5:30).

« WEEK 10 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 2:8 But you, son of man, hear what I say to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I give you.

3:1 Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.

The Scriptures contain at least three examples of those who ate the Word of God. The first is Jeremiah, who said, “Your words were found and I ate them...” (Jer. 15:16a). To eat something is not merely to receive it, but to assimilate it. To assimilate is to receive something into you, digest it, and make it a part of yourself. The second example of someone eating the Word of God is recorded in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet Ezekiel ate the Word of God (3:1-3). Then in Revelation 10 we read that the apostle John also ate the Word of God.

Jeremiah said, “Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart” (Jer. 15:16b). This is a kind of enjoyment....God’s Word is an enjoyment; after it is taken into us and assimilated into our very being, it becomes joy within us and rejoicing without. David said, “How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psa. 119:103). The Word is indeed an enjoyment; it is even sweeter and more pleasant than honey to our taste. (Pray-reading the Word, pp. 5-6)

Today’s Reading

We realize that the Word of God is not only for us to learn, but even more for us to taste, to eat, to enjoy, and to digest. (Pray-reading the Word, p. 6)

“And the voice which I heard out of heaven, I heard again speaking with me and saying, Go, take the opened scroll in the hand of the Angel....And I went to the Angel and told Him to give me the little scroll. And He said to me, Take it and devour it, and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey. And I took the little scroll out of the hand of the Angel and devoured it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth; and when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And they said to me, You must prophesy again...” [Rev. 10:8-11]. God commands John to devour the little scroll. (CWWN, vol. 16, pp. 90-91)

The writer of Revelation not only received but also devoured the scroll....We must receive the divine revelation, especially the book of Revelation, in this way. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel did this (Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 2:8; 3:1-3). (Rev. 10:10, footnote 1)

When we receive the divine revelation by devouring it, it is sweet as we eat it, but it becomes bitter as we digest it, that is, as we experience it. (Rev. 10:10, footnote 2)

God’s words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them (Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3). God’s word is the divine supply as food to nourish us. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being to nourish us that we may be constituted with His element. This is a crucial aspect of God’s economy. (Jer. 15:16, footnote 1)

God’s intention is to impart Himself to us and work Himself into us. He does this by means of the Spirit as the “antenna” and the Bible as the “ground wire.” By these means, the heavenly riches are transmitted into us. On our part, we need to turn away from trying to do good and away from taking the Bible merely as a book of ethics and instead come to the Word for nourishment. We should not simply read the Bible and study it; we also need to pray-read it.

It is not sufficient to understand the Bible—we also need to eat the words of the Bible....The Bible is not only good for reading and studying, but, even the more, it is especially good for eating [cf. Jer. 15:16; Matt. 4:4]. Oh, we need to eat the Word of God!

The best way to eat the Word is to pray-read. If we want to enjoy the bountiful supply of the Spirit, we need to eat the Word. We have pointed out that the bountiful supply of the Spirit is equal to the riches of Christ and that the riches of Christ are embodied in the Word. Therefore, to enjoy the riches we must pray-read the Word. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 317-318)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, “The Lord’s Recovery of Eating,” ch. 1; CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, “Eating the Lord,” chs. 1-2

« WEEK 10 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

1 Pet. 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation.

The word of God is not mainly for knowledge. In this short portion of the Word (Heb. 5:11-14), there seems to be a contradiction. Verse 12 uses the words teachers and teach. This surely refers to knowledge. However, in these verses it is clearly and definitely indicated that the word of God is for nourishment, for it likens His word to either milk or solid food. Milk and solid food are not for knowledge. People do not study them; they drink and eat of them as nourishment.

Many have argued with me, saying, “How can you say that we don’t need teaching? Don’t you believe that the Bible is a book of teaching? Even you yourself teach people.” Yes, the Bible is a book of teaching, but it does not teach us merely for mental knowledge; its teaching ministers food to us. The aim of the Bible is not for our mental comprehension and knowledge; it is absolutely for our spiritual realization and nourishment. According to the word of the Lord Jesus, the words of God are for us to eat. In order to live, we must take the word of God as our food. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 315-316)

Today’s Reading

[In Matthew 4] the newly anointed King confronted the enemy’s temptation not by His own word, but by the word of the Scriptures, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. This word indicates that the Lord Jesus took the word of God in the Scriptures as His bread and lived on it. The Greek word translated “word” in Matthew 4:4 is rhema. Rhema, the instant word, differs from logos, the constant word. In this temptation, all the words quoted from Deuteronomy by the Lord were logos, the constant word in the Scriptures. But when He quoted them, they became rhema, the instant word applied to His situation. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 140-141)

Christ as the bread of life is embodied in the word of life. He is the Spirit embodied in the Word. In addition to the Spirit, who is wonderful, we need something solid, visible, tangible, and touchable—the word of life.

In John 6:63 “the words” follow “the Spirit”. The Spirit is living and real, yet He is very mysterious, intangible, and difficult for people to apprehend; the words, however, are substantial. First, the Lord Jesus indicated that for giving life He would become the Spirit. Then He said that the words He speaks are spirit and life. This shows that His spoken words are the embodiment of the Spirit of life. He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who is life. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2877-2878)

First Peter 2:2 says, “As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation.” Born through regeneration (1:3, 23), the believers become babes who can grow in life unto further salvation, and that for God’s building, by being nourished with the spiritual milk.

“Guileless” in 1 Peter 2:2 does not mean unadulterated, in contrast to less pure teachings; instead, it is guileless in contrast to the guile in verse 1. Guileless milk is milk without false purpose, without any other goal but to nourish the soul.

The Greek word rendered “of the word” is logikos. This word, in Romans 12:1 translated “reasonable,” is derived from the noun logos—the word; hence, of the word; having the sense of pertaining to the mind (in contrast to the body), to the rational faculties; hence, rational, logical, reasonable. The milk of the word is not milk for the body, but is milk for the soul, the inner being. It is conveyed in the word of God to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind, and it is assimilated by our mental faculties. (Life-study of 1 Peter, pp. 125-126)

Further Reading: Life-study of John, msg. 16; Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 15

« WEEK 10 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 5:13-14 For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant; but solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.

As believers in Christ, we need to grow and be transformed for the building up of God's spiritual house. God's goal in the believers is to have a house built up with spiritual stones, not separated and scattered stones, not even a pile of stones merely gathered together, but stones built up with one another. Hence, feeding on Christ by the nourishing milk in the word of God (1 Pet. 2:2-3) is not only for growing in life but also for building up. Growing is for building up. Although the nourishing milk of the word is for the soul through the mind, it eventually nourishes our spirit, making us not soulish but spiritual, suitable for building up a spiritual house for God. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2230)

Today's Reading

We thank the Lord that He created us with a spirit by which we may drink His word. But if we would use our spirit to drink the word, we need to exercise our spirit. The best way to exercise our spirit is to pray. Ephesians 6:17 and 18 say that we should receive the word of God by means of all prayer, praying at every time in spirit. If we would have the word, faith, and the Spirit, we need to exercise our spirit by praying. When we walk, we automatically exercise our feet. Likewise, when we pray, we spontaneously exercise our spirit. Paul charges us to pray at every time (v. 18) and also to persevere in prayer (Col. 4:2). If we want to enjoy the word and have the Spirit with faith, we must pray by exercising our spirit. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Secret of Experiencing Christ," p. 534)

In 1 Corinthians 3:2 Paul goes on to say, "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. But neither yet now are you able." To give milk to drink or food to eat is to feed others. Feeding refers to the matter of life. This differs from teaching, which refers to knowledge. What the apostle ministered to the Corinthian believers seemed to be knowledge. Actually it was milk (not yet solid food), and it should have nourished them. Milk is mainly for infants, whereas solid food is for the mature (Heb. 5:12). The fact that the Corinthian believers could not receive solid food indicates that they were not growing in life. (Life-study of 1 Corinthians, pp. 212-213)

The word concerning the kingdom is not "the good word of God" (Heb. 6:5); it is the word of righteousness. The good word of God is like milk. It is easy to receive, but it does not sustain long. Paul told the Hebrews that they had tasted of the heavenly gift, had become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and had tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age (vv. 4-5). However, he also told them that he had deeper things to say to them that they were not able to understand (5:10-12). The word of righteousness, on the other hand, is solid food. It is difficult to take, but it is solid and it sustains long.

Another way to receive, experience, and enjoy Christ is by taking the milk of the word as newborn babes for the growth in life unto salvation (1 Pet. 2:2). Experiencing Christ in this way is proper while we are still babes. After a certain period of time, however, we should not remain babes. We need to advance beyond 1 Peter 2:2 and proceed to Hebrews 5:13-14 to eat the word of righteousness. (The Central Line of the Divine Revelation, pp. 217-218)

If you still do not understand what the word of righteousness is, read Hebrews 3 and 4 again....Keep in mind that the word of righteousness is deeper than the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God, because it embodies the deeper thought of God's justice and righteousness in His dispensational and governmental dealings with His people. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 320-321)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msg. 29; Elders' Training, Book 6: The Crucial Points of the Truth in Paul's Epistles, pp. 124-128

« WEEK 10 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

The healthy color in [a healthy] person's face is not from applying cosmetics to his skin. The application of cosmetics is a mere outward change by outward makeup. The way to have a healthy appearance is by eating healthy food. The healthy food metabolically makes us healthy, giving us a healthy appearance outwardly. In order to grow in life and have the transformation in life, we need to eat Christ as our healthy, spiritual food. When we eat, digest, and assimilate Christ as our spiritual food, the essence of this food gets into our being and produces transformation. Many Christians today are weak because they do not eat Jesus. If we eat Jesus every day, we will be spiritually energetic and will be transformed in life. (The Constitution and the Building Up of the Body of Christ, p. 83)

Today's Reading

God's eternal plan is to work Himself into His chosen people so that He becomes their very constituent....God not only desires that man be His vessel to contain Him (Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7), but also wants man to eat, digest, and assimilate Him (John 6:57). When we eat, digest, and assimilate physical food, we are energized and strengthened. The food that we eat is dispensed into our blood and through the blood into every part of our body. Eventually, the food that we have eaten becomes the fiber, tissue, and cells of our being. In the same way, God's eternal plan is to dispense Himself into us so that He becomes every fiber of our inward being. He wants to be digested and assimilated by us so that He can become the constituent of our inward being. (The Divine Dispensing for the Divine Economy, p. 9)

[In Matthew 15] the Lord seemed to be saying to the Canaanite woman, "You don't need healing. You need Me!...You need to eat Me. I came as bread for people to eat, to digest, and to assimilate. I would like to get into your being, into your system, vessels, and fibers. I would like to get into your very constituent and become you....Don't deal with things in an outward way. Rather, deal with everything in an inward way by taking Me into you. As long as I can get into you to nourish you, every problem will be solved."

We do not need outward rituals or practices. In today's religion people are following outward practices. But God's economy is not a matter of outward things; it is a matter of Christ coming into us inwardly. For this, we need to take Christ in by eating Him. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 550-551)

The food we eat and digest becomes our life supply. In order for anything to be our life or life supply, that thing must be organic. If you swallow a stone, that stone cannot become your life supply, because a stone is not living and organic. Only something organic can be digested by us and then assimilated into us to become our life supply. In a similar way, in order for the Triune God to be our life supply and even our life, He must come into us to be digested and assimilated by us. To be sure, the Triune God is living and organic.

According to chapter 6 of the Gospel of John, Christ is a loaf, the bread of life, for us to eat. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever" (v. 51). Then He went on to say, "As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (v. 57). Any believer who eats the Lord Jesus as the bread of life will live by Him. When we eat this bread of life, He comes into us to be digested by us and to be assimilated into us organically. This is the only way the Triune God can become our life. The Triune God becomes our life supply and our life by entering into us organically to be assimilated into the very fibers of our spiritual being. (Life-study of Mark, p. 383)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1963, vol. 3, "Enjoying Christ as the Word and the Spirit through Prayer," ch. 6; The Divine Dispensing for the Divine Economy, ch. 1

« WEEK 10 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, given for the life of the world.

58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven, not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread shall live forever.

As the portion of the saints, Christ is also the believers' spiritual food. First Corinthians 10:1-3 says that the children of Israel went out of Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and "all ate the same spiritual food" in the wilderness. The spiritual food here refers to manna (Exo. 16:14-18), which typifies Christ as the daily life supply (John 6:31-35) for the believers' journey. We believers should all eat the same spiritual food, not eating anything other than Christ.

The Christ who is our spiritual food is the Christ who becomes subjective to us. He is the processed Triune God indwelling our spirit subjectively as the all-inclusive Spirit. Therefore, He can be our daily spiritual food. Anything that is to be our food and life supply must be something that can enter into us and then be digested and assimilated by us to become the elements of our tissue and fiber. This is precisely what Christ is to us. When we eat Christ as our spiritual food, He enters into us and mingles with us as one. (Truth Lessons—Level Two, vol. 3, p. 80)

Today's Reading

In John 6:48 the Lord declared that He was the bread of life, indicating that He would be man's life supply in the form of food, like the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). He was God incarnated in order to be the bread of life for us to eat. He came down from heaven not only to be our Savior but also to be our food....We all need to receive Him as the bread of life, the spiritual food, to us.

In John 6:57 the Lord said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me."...To eat Jesus is to receive Him into us that He may be assimilated....Then we live by the Lord whom we have received. This is the living that we should have according to God's ordination in His economy. For our spiritual living, Christ should be our unique food for us to be daily strengthened, sustained, and satisfied by Him. (Truth Lessons—Level Two, vol. 3, pp. 80-81)

We must not merely learn the techniques of bearing fruit and feeding the new ones. We have to live a daily life of breathing, drinking, and feeding on Christ, taking Christ every day as our very element and essence. We must not only receive Him, but also digest Him, assimilate Him, and let Him become the content of our being. Then we will be one with Him. (The Divine Dispensing for the Divine Economy, p. 49)

When we take something into our stomach by eating and drinking, we are not merely being filled up. By digestion, what we eat is assimilated into our being. Thus, after eating we need the digestion and assimilation. By digesting and assimilating what we eat and drink, we absorb all the nourishment into our blood. This nourishment, after getting into our blood, becomes our cells. Then after a certain time all the cells become our organic tissues, our very being.

If I put water into a cup, it is just filled up. There is no digestion, assimilation, growth, or transformation. The water can never become the very element and essence of the cup. It is different with us human beings. How can a turkey be put into a human vessel? The only way is for this person to eat the turkey. Then the turkey becomes this person's essence and element. Jesus said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6:57b). A person is full of energy because of what he has eaten. We live by what we eat. We eat Jesus, so we live by Jesus....When we eat Jesus, we live by Jesus and we are Jesus. For us to live is Jesus! (CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, "The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ," p. 204)

Further Reading: Knowing and Experiencing God as Life, ch. 1; CWWL, 1978, vol. 3, "The Healthy Word," ch. 8

« WEEK 10 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 3:3 And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate it, and it was like honey in my mouth in its sweetness.

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

We need to eat Jesus by calling on the name of the Lord. But after we eat, we also need a good digestion. We do not want to have indigestion....Eating without a good digestion will cause trouble. When we eat Christ, we also need to spiritually digest Him in a proper way. If you have a proper digestion, the food you eat can get into every part of your physical being. There is the thoroughfare for the food to get through. Indigestion means that there is no thoroughfare for the food.

Now we need to consider how this applies to us in a spiritual sense. Some dear saints may enjoy calling on the Lord and pray-reading the Word at first. But after a certain time, they lose their taste and appetite for this. This is because after taking in the Lord Jesus, something happened within them. There was indigestion. There was no thoroughfare for the Lord Jesus to get through. After calling on the Lord Jesus and pray-reading His Word, we have to say, "Lord, be merciful to me. Keep my whole being with all my inward parts open to You." (CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, "The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ," p. 205)

Today's Reading

I am not speaking something doctrinally but something that is very practical to us in our Christian life. After you call on the Lord, I have the full assurance that He gets into you. But the problem is this—after your calling on the name of the Lord, after the Lord gets into you,...you may be open to Him in a little part of your being, but most of your being is closed to Him.

The Lord Jesus is real, living, and practical. When you call, "Lord Jesus," He gets into you and fills you up. While you are calling "Lord Jesus," this practical and living Jesus will touch your natural being. But many of you would say, "No, Lord. Don't touch me here. Stay where You are. You are my guest, and You must stay in the living room. Don't get into my private bedroom. That's for me, not for You." This means indigestion....There is no free course for the [Lord as the spiritual] food to get into your inward parts, so you have indigestion.

By eating we have digesting, by digesting we have the assimilation, and by this assimilation we get the practical nourishment of the riches of Jesus into our being. All the riches of Christ eventually will grow into our organic tissues. Then we become Christ. It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. To me, to live is Christ. The Christian life is not a matter of imitating Jesus....The Lord's way is not the way of teaching us to imitate Him. The Lord's way is the way of life, and the way of life is to eat. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, "The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ," pp. 205-207)

To eat is to take food into us that it may be assimilated organically into our body. Hence, to eat the Lord Jesus is to receive Him into us that He may be assimilated by the regenerated new man in the way of life....It is by this that He, the resurrected One, lives in us (John 14:19-20). (John 6:57, footnote 1)

The one bread signifies the one Body of Christ. We all are one Body because we all partake of the one bread. Our joint partaking of the one bread makes us all one. This indicates that our partaking of Christ makes us all His one Body. The very Christ of whom we all partake constitutes us His one Body. (1 Cor. 10:17, footnote 1)

Partaking of (that is, eating—1 Cor. 10:28-30) the one bread identifies us with it. This indicates that our partaking of Christ, our enjoying of Christ, identifies us with Him, making us one with Him. (1 Cor. 10:17, footnote 2)

Further Reading: The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ, ch. 6; CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 1, "The Enjoyment of Christ for the Body in 1 Corinthians," ch. 3

<< WEEK 10 —HYMN

Hymns, #612

God intends that all His being Experience of God — By Exercising the Spirit

612

1. God in-tends that all His be - ing Be my full sup - ply;
With Him I must be u - nit - ed, In spir - it nigh.
Chorus
(C) All God's be-ing, all His rich - es In the Spir - it flow;
I must ex - er - cise my spir - it Him to know.

2. All the riches of His nature
He has given me;
I must touch Him in the spirit,
These to see.

3. With the mind we understand Him,
With the spirit touch;
Those who never use the spirit
Lack very much.

4. When to messages I listen,
I must pray them in;
Thus the word will be digested
From within.

5. When the Word of God I study,
I must touch the Lord;
If in mind and not in spirit,
Dead is the Word.

6. O what riches, O what glory
In the Spirit shine!
When I exercise my spirit,
All are mine.

WEEK 11 —OUTLINE

God's Recovery by Life through His Shepherding

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 34:11-16, 23-31; John 10:10, 16; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:16-17

<< DAY 1 >>

I. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive, tender care of the flock (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28):

A. Shepherding refers to caring for all the needs of the sheep (Psa. 23).

B. All the sheep need to be well provided for and well tended to.

II. In Ezekiel 34 the Lord Himself comes as the Shepherd to search for His sheep and seek them out (vv. 11-31; Luke 15:3-7; Matt. 9:36; John 10:11; 21:15-17; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:3-4):

A. The Lord brings us out from among the unbelievers to Himself (Ezek. 34:12-13a; cf. Eph. 2:12-13).

B. He brings us to our own land, signifying Christ as the good land of Canaan (Ezek. 34:13b; cf. Col. 1:12).

C. He brings us back to the high mountains, signifying the resurrected and ascended Christ (Ezek. 34:13-14).

D. He brings us back to the streams, signifying the living water of the life-giving Spirit (v. 13; Rev. 22:1; 1 Cor. 12:13; Psa. 36:8).

<< DAY 2 >>

E. He feeds His flock by the streams, signifying His feeding us with His riches (Ezek. 34:13; Rev. 22:1-2a).

F. He brings us back to the good and rich pasture, signifying Christ as our life supply (Ezek. 34:14; Psa. 23:2; John 10:9; cf. 1 Tim. 1:4).

G. He causes us to lie down, giving us inward rest (Ezek. 34:15; S.S. 1:7; Matt. 11:28-30).

H. He binds up the broken one and strengthens the sick one, signifying His binding up and healing the brokenhearted and sick ones (Ezek. 34:16a; Isa. 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19; Matt. 9:9-13).

I. The Lord exercises righteous judgments among us, clearing away all the unjust things (Ezek. 34:17-22; Col. 3:15).

J. Christ is the real David, the real Shepherd, set up as the one Shepherd to feed us and cause us to be filled and satisfied (Ezek. 34:23):

- 1.He takes care of us, including all our problems and responsibilities and every aspect of our living (Psa. 23).
- 2.The issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship (Rev. 7:17).

<< DAY 3 >>

- 3.As we experience the Lord's shepherding and remain under His kingship, we enjoy His covenant of peace and are no longer subject to spiritual troubles and disturbances (Ezek. 37:25a).
- 4.Under His shepherding, all the evil beasts, evil persons, are kept away from the Lord's recovered people (34:25b; cf. Acts 20:28-29; Phil. 3:2-3).
- 5.He breaks the bars of all our yokes, including the yokes of sin and the world, and delivers us from all kinds of slavery (Ezek. 34:27b).
- 6.He promises that we will not be prey to the enemy and that we will dwell in peace and safety (vv. 28a, 25b).
- K.He causes us to become a source of blessing to others so that they may be supplied with Him as the showers of blessing and as the planting place of renown (vv. 26-27a, 29; Zech. 10:1; Ezek. 36:35).
- L. Through the experience of His shepherding, we have God's presence; we are His and He is ours in our fellowship with Him in oneness for the mingling of God and man (34:30-31).

<< DAY 4 >>

III. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls (John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25):

- A.As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10-11):
 - 1.He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life (vv. 11, 15, 17).
 - 2.He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him (v. 9).
 - 3.The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding (v. 16).
- B.God raised up from the dead "our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant" (Heb. 13:20):
 - 1.The eternal covenant is to consummate the New Jerusalem by shepherding.
 - 2.The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock,

which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.

3.As the great Shepherd, the Lord is making real to us the contents of the new covenant (8:8-13).

C.As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches (1 Pet. 5:4):

1.Without the elders' shepherding, the church cannot be built up.

2.The elders' shepherding should be Christ's shepherding through them.

D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being (2:25):

1.He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.

« DAY 5 »

2.Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul in order to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and our problems, needs, and wounds.

3.As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord restores our soul and gives rest to our soul (Psa. 23:3a; Matt. 11:28-30).

IV. John 21, a chapter on shepherding, is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John; shepherding is the key to the Gospel of John:

A.The Gospel of John is a book on Christ coming to be our life by cherishing and nourishing us; to cherish people is to make them happy, pleasant, and comfortable (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34), and to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ (Matt. 24:45-47).

B.After His resurrection, the Lord shepherded Peter and commissioned him to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep; this is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, the church, which issues in the Body of Christ (John 21:15-17):

1.The apostles were commissioned by the ascended Christ to cooperate with Him to carry out God's New Testament economy (1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10).

2.Regarding shepherding, the apostolic ministry cooperates with Christ's heavenly ministry, doing on earth what He is doing in the heavens.

V. First Peter 5:2 speaks of shepherding the flock of God according to God:

A.According to God means that we live God.

B.When we are one with God, we become God and we are God in our shepherding of others.

« DAY 6 »

C. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.

D. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes (1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16).

E. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function:

1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become a totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself (John 4:14; Col. 3:4).

2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness (1 John 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:4).

3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities (John 12:24).

4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy (Psa. 23:6b; Eph. 4:12, 16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11).

VI. For eternity we will have the experience and enjoyment of Christ as our eternal Shepherd (7:16-17):

A. As our eternal Shepherd, Christ will lead us into Himself as the springs of waters of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God (v. 17a).

B. The waters of life will be supplied, and the water of tears will be wiped away (v. 17b).

C. Under Christ's shepherding in eternity, there will be no tears, no hunger, and no thirst—only enjoyment (vv. 16-17).

« WEEK 11 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

When the Lord stayed with His disciples after His resurrection and before His ascension, in one of His appearances, He commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens (John 21:15-17). Shepherding implies feeding, but it includes much more than feeding. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 131)

Today's Reading

[In John 21] Jesus said to Peter, “Feed My lambs” (v. 15). To feed is to nourish others with the riches of the inner life. This is a mouth-to-mouth feeding. The second time, the Lord said to Peter, “Shepherd My sheep” (v. 16). To shepherd the sheep is to take care of all the needs of the sheep. The third time, the Lord said to him, “Feed My sheep” (v. 17). At the time the Lord said this to Peter, Peter had been following the Lord for over three years. After His resurrection, the Lord charged him especially with this matter of shepherding the sheep. This shows how important it is to shepherd the sheep. Later, when Peter wrote his first Epistle, he entreated the elders to shepherd the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:1-2).

Shepherding refers to caring for all of the needs of the sheep, whether the need is grass, water, or shelter. All the sheep are to be well provided for and well tended to. (A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need, pp. 52-53)

Ezekiel 34:12-13a says, “As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day when he is among his sheep which are scattered, so I will seek out My sheep; and I will deliver them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries.” Here we see that Ezekiel prophesied that as the Shepherd the Lord would bring His people, His sheep, out of the nations.

This also has been our experience. When we were fallen as sinners or when we became backsliders, we were among the nations living like Gentiles. Although we were living like unbelievers among billions of others on earth, the Lord Jesus sought us out and brought us out of the nations, out of the unbelievers....Formerly you were the same as the unbelievers, but one day the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd sought you and brought you out from among the unbelievers and brought you to Himself.

In verse 13b the Lord went on to say that He would bring His people back to their own land....Before we were saved or after we backslid, we were separated from Christ. But the Lord sought us out and brought us back to Himself and even into Himself as our good land. Today we are in Christ as the good land. The good land today is also in the church life.

The Lord promised to bring His people back not only to their own land but also to the high mountains (vv. 13-14). Since the high mountains signify the resurrected and ascended Christ, this indicates that the Lord Jesus brings us back to the experience of the resurrected and ascended Christ.

The Lord also said that He would bring His people back to the rivers (v. 13). These rivers signify the life-giving Spirit, the living water of the Spirit. From the mountains, the resurrected and ascended Christ, the living water of the Spirit flows. The Spirit of life flows forth from Christ in His resurrection and ascension. After the Lord sought us out and brought us back to Himself, we not only returned to Christ in the transcendent position of His ascension, but we also began to drink of the Spirit as the living water. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 176-177)

Further Reading: Life-study of the Psalms, msg. 11; The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John, ch. 28

« WEEK 11 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 34:14-15 I will feed them with good pasture, and their dwelling place will be upon the mountains of the heights of Israel; there they will lie down in a good dwelling place, and on rich pasture they will feed upon the mountains of Israel. I Myself will shepherd My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, declares the Lord Jehovah.

Ezekiel 34:13 says that the Lord would feed His flock by the rivers. We can testify that in the local churches we have the sense that the Lord Jesus is feeding us day by day by the rivers of living water....Something is flowing [in the meetings] as a river, and we are by the side of the river enjoying the riches of Christ. This is not something of man; it is something of our Shepherd, who is feeding us by the rivers. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 177-178)

Today's Reading

Ezekiel 34:14 goes on to say, "I will feed them with good pasture, and their dwelling place will be upon the mountains of the heights of Israel; there they will lie down in a good dwelling place, and on rich pasture they will feed upon the mountains of Israel." Here we see that the Lord would bring His people back not only to the rivers but also to the good and rich pasture. Whereas the rivers signify the life-giving Spirit, the pasture signifies Christ. By the rivers we have the rich Christ as our pasture. The rivers are for our drinking, and the pasture is for our eating. In the meetings of the local churches, we do have the sense that we are by the rivers and in the pasture, that we are drinking and eating. Praise the Lord that we are under the care of our Shepherd, drinking by the rivers and feeding in the pasture!

In verse 15 the Lord, the Shepherd, says, "I Myself will shepherd My flock, and I will cause them to lie down." To lie down means not to work, struggle, and strive. In the Bible to lie down is to rest....Whenever the Lord feeds us, shepherds us, and gives us something to drink, He also gives us rest. In the church meetings we often have the sense that we are lying down to rest. Outwardly we are sitting, but inwardly we are lying down to rest.

Ezekiel 34:16a continues, "I will seek the lost one and bring back the one that was driven away and bind up the broken one and strengthen the sick one." Here to strengthen means to heal. As the Shepherd the Lord will bind up that which was broken and heal that which was sick. How we need the Lord's binding and healing!...Praise the Lord that while we are eating, drinking, and resting, we are under His binding, strengthening, and healing.

Verse 17 says, "And as for you, O My flock, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats."...This indicates that when we have experienced the Lord's recovery by life—that is, when we have been brought back to the mountains, the rivers, and the pasture and have experienced rest and healing—there can be righteous judgments among us....Actually, only the Lord who shepherds us, supplies us, and heals us can make such judgments. Only after He gives us the life supply, binds up our wounds, and heals us can all the unjust things among us be cleared away.

Verse 23 goes on to say, "And I will set up over them one Shepherd, My Servant David, and He will feed them; He will feed them, and He will be their Shepherd." David typifies Christ. Christ is the real David, the real Shepherd, feeding us and causing us to be filled and satisfied....As our Shepherd Christ takes care of us, including all our problems and responsibilities. He takes care of us not only in spiritual things but in all things related to our human needs. This means that, according to Psalm 23, He takes care of us in every aspect of our living.

When the Lord Jesus comes as the Shepherd, He comes also as the King. The issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship. The Lord is our Shepherd to be our King, and He is our King to be our Shepherd. On the one hand He shepherds us; on the other hand, He governs us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 178-181)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, ch. 7

« WEEK 11 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 34:26 And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing, and I will cause the showers to come down in their season; there will be showers of blessing.

30 Thus they will know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people, declares the Lord Jehovah.

Certain portions of Ezekiel speak of God's covenant with Israel....Once a matter has been covenanted, it is established and secure and it cannot be changed. Therefore, this covenant of peace [cf. Ezek. 37:26a] is established, secure, and unchanging. As we experience the Lord's shepherding and remain under His kingship, we enjoy His peace and are no longer subject to spiritual troubles and disturbances. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 181-182)

Today's Reading

Ezekiel 34:25a says, "And I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish evil beasts from the land." Here we are told that, under the Lord's shepherding, all the evil beasts will be kept away from the Lord's recovered people. According to Paul's word in Acts 20:29 evil beasts ("fierce wolves") refer to evil persons who disturb God's people. In the proper church life there are no wolves, only lambs. In His recovery the Lord causes the evil beasts to cease.

In Ezekiel 34:27 the Lord promised to break all the yokes, including the yokes of sin and the world. With Him as our Shepherd, we have no yokes and no bondage. Jesus breaks every fetter! In the local churches we have no yokes. Instead, we have full liberty and full release....Verse 27 also indicates that the Lord delivers us from all kinds of slavery. In the church we do not have the sense that we are under slavery. Rather, we have the sense of liberty. The more we enjoy the Lord's shepherding, the more we are liberated from every kind of slavery.

Verse 28a says, "And they will no longer be prey to the nations." Here the Lord promised that those in His recovery would never be a prey to the enemy. This means that they would never be defeated or captured by the enemy. In the church life we share the spoil of the Lord's recovery, of the Lord's victory. Instead of struggling to gain the victory, we are simply enjoying the victory of the Lord.

Eventually the Lord promised that all those in His recovery would dwell in peace and safety. Verse 25b says, "They will dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods"; verse 27b says, "They will be secure in their land"; and verse 28b says, "They will dwell securely, and no one will make them afraid." This indicates that we will dwell securely and restfully in Christ, without any fear. In Christ we have peace.

In verse 26 the Lord promised not only that His people would receive His blessing but also that He would make them a blessing. If there is the peace which is the peace of the covenant, the Lord's blessing will follow. First, we ourselves will enjoy the Lord's blessing, and then He will cause us to become a source of blessing to others so that they may be supplied.

In verse 29 the Lord promised to raise up a planting place of renown, whose fruit would be for the enjoyment of His recovered people. Once again, this planting place is Christ as the rich food supply. Whatever needs we may have and whatever difficulties we may face, He will give us the rich supply.

Verses 30 and 31 conclude, "Thus they will know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people, declares the Lord Jehovah. And you are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God, declares the Lord Jehovah." Here the Lord promised that He would be with them, that they would be His people, and that He would be their God. They have God's presence, God is among them, and they are before God. This is the perfect fellowship with God, the fellowship in oneness—the genuine recovery.

We have such a fellowship, such a oneness, for we are one with God, and God is one with us. This is the recovery of the church life—the real mingling of God and man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 182-185)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 16

« WEEK 11 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Heb. 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant.

The Gospel of John tells us not only that the Lord is the life (11:25; 14:6) but also that the Lord is the good Shepherd who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (10:10-11). He Himself is also our pasture for us to eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him (10:9). (The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation, p. 33)

Today's Reading

The pasture in John 10:9 signifies Christ as the feeding place for the sheep. When the pasture is not available (for example, in the wintertime or at night), the sheep must be kept in the fold. When the pasture is ready, there is no further need for the sheep to remain in the fold. To be kept in the fold is transitional and temporary. To be in the pasture enjoying its riches is final and permanent. Before Christ came, the law was a ward, and being under the law was transitional. Now that Christ has come, all God's chosen people must come out of the law and come into Him to enjoy Him as their pasture (Gal. 3:23-25; 4:3-5). This should be final and permanent. (John 10:9, footnote 2)

As a man, the Lord has the psuche life, the human life, and as God, He has the zoe life, the divine life. He laid down His soul, His psuche life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep (John 10:15, 17-18) that they may share His zoe life, His divine life (v. 10b), the eternal life (v. 28), by which they can be formed into one flock under Himself as the one Shepherd. As the good Shepherd, He feeds His sheep with the divine life in this way and for this purpose. (John 10:11, footnote 1)

[In Hebrews 13:20] the eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body and consummating the New Jerusalem. The eternal covenant of God is to consummate the New Jerusalem by the shepherding. God raised up our Lord from the dead to be the great Shepherd to consummate the New Jerusalem according to God's eternal covenant. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 132)

Christ is the great Shepherd through whom God, based upon His redeeming blood of the eternal covenant, perfects the sheep of God, the churches, in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13:20-21).

Christ is the Chief Shepherd, shepherding His flock through the elders of the churches (1 Pet. 5:4). All the elders are subordinate shepherds. Christ as the Head is the Chief Shepherd....When we shepherd, it should be Christ shepherding through us....All the elders have to learn to shepherd the churches not by themselves in the old creation but by Christ as the shepherding Chief in resurrection. (The Vital Groups, pp. 52-53, 52)

Without the elders' shepherding, the church cannot be built up. All the believers, regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding. Even a brief word spoken to a saint after a meeting will comfort, encourage, and strengthen that one. (The Secret of God's Organic Salvation—"the Spirit Himself with Our Spirit," p. 27)

Peter was so impressed with the commission of the Lord [in John 21] that in his first book he told the believers that they were like sheep being led astray, but they had now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer (Christ) of their souls (1 Pet. 2:25). Christ's shepherding of His flock includes His caring for their outward things and also their inner being, their souls. He takes care of the things concerning their souls by overseeing their souls. Christ indwells us to be our life and everything, but He is also overseeing, observing, the condition and situation of our inner being. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our soul, our real person. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 132)

Further Reading: Life-study of John, msg. 22; Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 21

« WEEK 11 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 11:28-29 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

1 Pet. 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly.

Christ's shepherding does not mainly take care of our body or our spirit; it primarily takes care of our soul. However, as the Shepherd and Overseer, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit. He does not shepherd us or oversee us from the heavens. Today our Shepherd and Overseer is in our spirit, indwelling us as the life-giving Spirit. His shepherding and overseeing begin from our spirit and then spread to every part of our soul. This means that from our spirit Christ reaches the parts of our soul—the mind, emotion, and will—and takes care of all our problems, needs, and wounds. How wonderful! (Life-study of 1 Peter, p. 196)

Today's Reading

John 21 is not merely an appendix but also the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John, a book on Christ being God coming to be our life....Eventually, such a book has a conclusion on shepherding. If we do not know what shepherding is, the entire Gospel of John will be in vain to us. It is only when we shepherd others that we can know John in an intrinsic way. Shepherding is the key to the Gospel of John.

Our Christ today is our High Priest....He sympathizes with our weakness because He was tempted in all respects like us. He is cherishing us in His humanity. Meanwhile, He is nourishing us in His divinity with all the positive aspects of His person revealed in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3....In His humanity He is cherishing us to make us proper so that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable. In His divinity He is nourishing us so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy. (The Vital Groups, pp. 60, 109)

John 21 reveals the apostolic ministry in cooperation with Christ's heavenly ministry. After Christ ascended to the heavens, He began His heavenly ministry. In doing this He raised up a group of His followers as His apostles who could fully cooperate with Him. These apostles were commissioned by the ascended Christ to cooperate with Him to carry out God's New Testament economy. What He was doing in the heavens, the apostles did on earth to carry out His heavenly ministry.

The Lord's shepherding was firstly in His earthy ministry (Matt. 9:36)....[His] shepherding is secondly in His heavenly ministry (1 Pet. 5:4) to take care of the church of God, issuing in His Body. When He was on the earth, He was shepherding. After His resurrection and ascension to the heavens, He is still shepherding.

This is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, pp. 130-131)

In his first Epistle, Peter spoke in 2:25 of Christ being the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul, our inner being and real person. Then in 5:1-2 he told the elders that their obligation is to shepherd God's flock according to God. According to God means that we must live God. We must have God on hand. We have God in our understanding, in our theology, and in our teaching, but we may not live God when we are shepherding people. When we are one with God, we become God. Then we have God and are God in our shepherding of others. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes. God is love, light, holiness, and righteousness. According to God is at least according to these four attributes of God. We must shepherd the young ones, the weak ones, and the backsliding ones according to these four attributes. Then we will be good shepherds. (The Vital Groups, pp. 60-61)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 32; Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, msg. 13

« WEEK 11 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 7:16-17 They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The elders should oversee “willingly, according to God” [1 Pet. 5:2]. To oversee according to God means according to God’s nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to man’s preference, interest, and purpose. The elders should not oversee according to their opinion, concept, or likes or dislikes. Instead, they should oversee according to God’s choice, desire, intention, and preference. The elders must oversee the church altogether according to God’s thought, feeling, will, and choice. They must oversee according to God’s likes and dislikes. (Life-study of 1 Peter, p. 293)

Today’s Reading

In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function (John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities (John 1:18; Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Rom. 8:29). We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy (Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2). When we are one with God, we become God and are God in our shepherding of others. (Raising Up the Next Generation for the Church Life, pp. 335-336)

We have to pray and look to the Lord very much that He would show us the intrinsic significance of John 1 through 16. The first four chapters unveil the flowing God in His divine processed Trinity. In John 4:14b the Lord said, “The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.” God the Father is the fountain emerging in God the Son as a spring gushing up to be a river, signifying God the Spirit. The Triune God flows into eternal life, and the eternal life has its totality. Our human life also has its totality. A living person is the totality of the human life. The totality of the divine life is the New Jerusalem, which is the destination of the flowing Triune God. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 143)

Christ shepherds all His believers and guides them to springs of waters of life (Rev. 7:17). In eternity future Christ will be our eternal Shepherd guiding us to springs of waters of life. (The Secret of God’s Organic Salvation—“the Spirit Himself with Our Spirit,” p. 26)

In eternity Christ will not only be the Lamb, the Husband, the temple, the lamp, the spring of the water of life, the tree of life, and the Son of Man—He will also be the Shepherd. In eternity we shall not have problems, but we shall still need Christ’s shepherding. A good shepherd not only solves the problems of the sheep but also feeds them. In fact, the most important task of a shepherd is the feeding of the sheep. Likewise, in the New Jerusalem our Shepherd, Christ, will feed us.

As our Shepherd Christ will lead us to the springs of the waters of life [Rev. 7:17]. This indicates that He will shepherd us into Himself. He will lead us into Himself as the spring of the water of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God, that we may express Him to the fullest extent for eternity. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 364)

Under the shepherding of Christ, “I will lack nothing” (Psa. 23:1)....In eternity, we shall drink of many springs and enjoy many different waters. How good this is!

Tears are a sign of dissatisfaction. Waters of life are for satisfaction. Because the Lamb will supply them with waters of life for their satisfaction, they will have no tears of dissatisfaction [Rev. 7:17]. The waters of life shall be supplied, and the water of tears shall be wiped away. There will be no tears, hunger, or thirst—just enjoyment. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 261)

Further Reading: The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John, pp. 558-560; The Vital Groups, ch. 8

« WEEK 11 —HYMN

Hymns, #1221

Jesus, our wonderful Shepherd

The Church — As God's Flock

1221

1. Je - sus, our won - der - ful Sheph - erd Brought us right out of the fold
In - to His pas - ture so plen - teous, In - to His rich - es un - told.
Chorus
(C) Glo - ri - ous church life, Feast - ing from such a rich store!
Here where we're dwell - ing in one - ness God commands life ev - er - more.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in 8/8 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of four staves. The first staff contains the first line of the verse, the second staff the second line, the third staff the chorus, and the fourth staff the final line of the verse. Chords are indicated above the notes: Bb, F/A, Gm, Bb/F, Cm, F7, Bb, Bb7/D, Eb, Bb/D, Gm, C, C7/E, F7, Bb, Bb/F, Bb, Bb/F, Bb, Gm, Cm, F7, Bb, Eb/Bb, Bb.

2. In the divisions He sought us,
Weary and famished for food;
Into the good land He brought us,
Oh, to our spirit how good!

3. Jesus Himself is our pasture,
He is the food that we eat;
We as His sheep are fed richly
Each time, whenever we meet.

4. Dwell we here on a high mountain,
Wet with the morning-fresh dew,
Slaking our thirst at the fountain,
Water so living and new.

5. Christ is our rest and enjoyment,
Here we have nothing to fear;
Here all the sheep dwell securely,
Kept by His presence so dear.

WEEK 12 —OUTLINE

The Inward Recovery by Life for the Carrying Out of God's Economy

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 36:21-38

<< DAY 1 >>

I. "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it" (Ezek. 35:2):

A. That the judgment on Edom is repeated here (cf. 25:12-14) indicates that in the process of God's recovery by life, there is still the need of God's judgment, particularly on Edom, who typifies the old man (see footnote 1 on v. 12):

1. The old man refers to the natural life in our soul; the old man is our very being, which was created by God but became fallen through sin, and it is the same as the first "I" in Galatians 2:20.

2. Formerly, our soul acted as an independent person, with the old man as its life and personality; now, since the old man has been crucified (Rom. 6:6), our soul should act only as an organ of Christ and should be under the control of our spirit, having Christ as its life.

3. Because the old man is very difficult to deal with, the judgment on the old man must be repeated again and again, until the day of the redemption of our body (Eph. 4:30).

B. In order to recover us and make us the new man, God must judge our old man, our old creation (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-11).

<< DAY 2 >>

II. For the inward recovery of His people, God acts on behalf of His holy name (Ezek. 36:21-23; Matt. 6:9; Isa. 29:23):

A. In His recovery God acts on behalf of His holy name (cf. Eph. 1:4; Rev. 21:2).

B. We have been recovered and revived not because of any merit in ourselves but because God did something in us for His own name (cf. 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:15).

III. For the inward recovery of His people, God applies His judicial redemption to them for their being cleansed with the precious blood of Christ (Ezek. 36:25; 1 Pet. 1:18-19):

A. The clean water in Ezekiel 36:25 refers to the redeeming and cleansing blood, which is a cleansing and opened fountain for sin and for impurity (Zech. 13:1; cf.

Num. 19:2-10).

B.The Lord washes us from all our filthiness, including all kinds of sinful things, unjust things, unrighteous things, and dark things (1 John 1:7, 9; cf. Eph. 5:8-9).

C.The Lord cleanses us from all our idols (Ezek. 14:3; 1 John 5:21; Col. 1:18b).

« DAY 3 »

IV. For the inward recovery of His people, God applies His organic salvation to them to give them a new heart and a new spirit so that they may be deified to become a new creation, the New Jerusalem (Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:2; Psa. 51:10; 78:8; 1 Pet. 3:4):

A.While we are in a fallen or backslidden state, our heart toward the Lord is stony and hard, and our spirit is deadened (Eph. 2:1; 4:18):

1.When the Lord saves us or revives us, He renews our heart, making our stony heart a heart of flesh, a heart that is soft and loving toward Him (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3).

2.Furthermore, He enlivens and renews our spirit with His divine life (Col. 2:13).

3.As a result, we love the Lord and desire Him with our renewed heart, and we can contact Him, receive Him, and contain Him by exercising our renewed spirit.

B.The Lord gives us a new heart to love Him (Mark 12:30):

1.Our heart represents us with regard to our inclination, affection, delight, and desire (cf. Matt. 15:8).

2.Our heart is our representative in action, our acting agent (cf. Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:18-19).

3.God gives us a new heart because He wants us to incline toward Him, adore Him, desire Him, and love Him (1 Cor. 16:22; 2:9).

4.In order to maintain the newness of our heart, we must keep our heart turned to the Lord and seek purity, loving Him with our whole heart (Mark 12:30; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Prov. 4:20-23; Psa. 119:2, 11):

a.Our heart needs to be soft (Ezek. 36:26; cf. Matt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 5:10-11a; Isa. 11:2; Rom. 8:28).

b.Our heart needs to be pure (Matt. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:22).

c. Our heart needs to be loving (Eph. 3:17, 19; 2 Cor. 5:14).

d.Our heart needs to be at peace (Acts 24:16).

« DAY 4 »

C. The Lord gives us a new spirit to receive and contact Him (John 4:24):

1. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit so that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, and be one with God (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17).
2. For us to have a new spirit means that our old, deadened spirit has been enlivened through regeneration (Eph. 2:1; John 3:6).
3. In his subtlety Satan has hidden the matter of the human spirit from most Christians; the spirit is an overlooked part of man (Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; Zech. 12:1; John 4:24; 1 Thes. 5:23; cf. Jude 19-21).
4. In order to maintain the newness of our spirit, we must continually exercise our spirit to contact the Lord so that we may walk, live, and have our being in and according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4; 6:4; 7:6; 1 Cor. 6:17):
 - a. We must call on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:12).
 - b. We must pray-read His word as the Spirit (Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18).
 - c. We must rejoice always, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything (1 Thes. 5:16-18).
 - d. We must fan our spirit into flame, not quenching the Spirit (2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Thes. 5:19).
 - e. We must practice prophesying for the building up of the church, not despising prophesying (v. 20; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 31-32).

« DAY 5 »

V. "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do" (Ezek. 36:27):

- A. For the inward recovery of His people, God not only gives us a new heart and a new spirit (v. 26) but also puts His Spirit within us, in our spirit, making the two spirits one mingled spirit (Rom. 8:9, 16) and causing us to be one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).
- B. God's Spirit within us contains God's nature, and God's nature corresponds to God's law; because we have God's nature within us (2 Pet. 1:4), we are able to keep His law spontaneously by walking according to our regenerated spirit, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 22-23, 25).
- C. The Lord's causing us to walk in His statutes refers to the law (the automatic principle; the innate, automatic function) of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2); this is the Lord's guiding us to walk on the paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Psa. 23:3).

- D. The righteous requirement of the law is spontaneously and automatically fulfilled in those who walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4, 2).
- E. The Spirit with our spirit is the key, the secret, to God's organic salvation (v. 16; 5:10).

<< DAY 6 >>

VI. As a result of the inward recovery by life, the desolate and waste places will become like the garden of Eden (Ezek. 36:34-36):

- A. The Lord's recovery should come to the point where it is like the garden of Eden.
- B. In "the garden of Eden" we have Christ as the plant of renown (34:29), Christ as the tree of life with the rich food supply (Rev. 2:7; 22:14).

VII. In His recovery by life, the Lord desires to increase us "with men like a flock" (Ezek. 36:37-38):

- A. The Lord has promised to increase us, filling the waste cities "with flocks of men" (v. 38), but we still need to inquire of Him, asking Him to do what He desires to do (Luke 10:2).
- B. We should not say that numbers do not mean anything and that we do not care for numbers; we need to pray for the increase, claiming the Lord's promise in Ezekiel 36; we need to remember that quality comes out of quantity.
- C. We need to pray that the Lord will give us the increase and that He will bring in flocks of men (cf. John 4:4-8, 28-30, 39-42; Luke 19:1-10).

« WEEK 12 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 35:2 Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it.

Rom. 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves.

The recovery by life begins in Ezekiel 33....Following this, in chapter 35 the Lord reminds us of the need to condemn our old man, which is signified by Edom. This is the reason that after chapter 30 there is another word concerning the judgment upon Edom. For the most part, God waits until judgment has been executed before He begins His work of recovery. However, in the process of recovery, there is still the need of God's judgment. This is true, in particular, regarding Edom. Edom was judged in the previous section, but because the old man is very difficult to deal with, the judgment upon the old man must be repeated. Yesterday you might have condemned your old man and experienced judgment upon him. But today your old man may return to pay you a visit, perhaps in a nice way or in a subtle way. You have been recovered and you have been brought back to Christ as the good land and have entered into the rich enjoyment of Christ. You might have thought that your old man had been fully condemned and judged, but you did not realize that he has come back without giving you any notice and without asking for permission to visit you. Now as you are enjoying Christ, he is with you, hating your enjoyment of Christ and your enjoyment of the church life. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 187-188)

Today's Reading

[In Romans 6:6 old man refers] to the natural life in our soul. The old man is our very being, which was created by God but became fallen through sin, and it is the same as the "I" in Galatians 2:20. It is not the soul itself but the life of the soul, which has been counted by God as hopeless and has been put on the cross and crucified with Christ. Formerly, our soul acted as an independent person, with the old man as its life and personality; now, since the old man has been crucified, our soul should act only as an organ of Christ and should be under the control of our spirit, having Christ as its life. (Rom. 6:6, footnote 2)

Ezekiel 35 says that Edom and his company were happy to see that Israel was desolate (vv. 12, 15). Edom was also waiting to possess the two nations of Israel and Judah, claiming them as belonging to Edom. To the Lord Edom was speaking nonsense, for He intended to exercise His judgment upon Edom once again.

We need to learn the lesson of judging Edom. While we are being recovered, we have to judge our old man again and again. The judgment upon Ammon, Moab, Tyrus, Zidon, and Egypt may be once for all, but the judgment upon Edom cannot be once for all. On the contrary, Edom, our old man, must be judged repeatedly until the day of the redemption of our body. This is the reason that between Ezekiel 34 and 36, which are wonderful chapters, there is a very negative chapter regarding the judgment upon Edom. Because Edom returns, the judgment upon him must be repeated. Although we have condemned him, judged him, and chased him away, he comes back. Therefore, we need to cooperate with the Lord to exercise once again His judgment upon the old man.

The genuine recovery of the Lord is not simply a matter of repenting, turning to the Lord, and enjoying the blessing of the Lord. There also needs to be a change in our life and nature. In His recovery, God needs to touch our heart and our spirit and thereby touch our life directly and change us in life and nature. Therefore, we need both the outward recovery described in Ezekiel 34 and the inward recovery described in Ezekiel 36. Because the recovery in Ezekiel 36 concerns our life and our nature and involves our heart and our spirit, chapter 35 is inserted to show the importance of judging our old man. In order to recover us and make us a new man, God must judge our old man, our old creation. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 188)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 17

« WEEK 12 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:21 But I had regard for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

25 And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

Ezekiel 36:21-23 says, “But I had regard for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, I am not doing this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations will know that I am Jehovah, declares the Lord Jehovah, when I am sanctified in you in their sight.” Here we see that in recovering His people, God acts on behalf of His holy name. The inward recovery of life is carried out by God for the sake of His name. Many of us can testify that we have been recovered and revived not because of any merit in ourselves but because God did something in us for His own name. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 189)

Today's Reading

The clean water in Ezekiel 36:25 refers to the Lord's redeeming and cleansing blood, which is a cleansing fountain (Zech. 13:1). In recovering us, the Lord washes us from two categories of dirty things—from filthiness, including all kinds of sinful things, unjust things, unrighteous things, and dark things, and from idols. (Ezek. 36:25, footnote 1)

Zechariah 13:1 says that the Lord's blood is a washing fountain....The Lord Jesus washes us with His cleansing blood not only when we are saved but also every time we are revived and brought back to Him.

The Lord washes us from two categories of dirty things—from filthiness and from idols....[Filthiness] also includes hating others, doing wrong to others, and indulging in worldly amusements. When we were saved, we felt ashamed of these filthy things. When we are revived, we also have such a feeling of shame, not wanting to recall the sinful and worldly things that we were once involved with. The Lord's blood as the clean water washes us from all our filthiness. Perhaps today we need to be washed from gossip, rumors, jealousy, criticism, and unkindness. We praise the Lord that no matter how filthy we were, the Lord's blood is the clean water that washes us and cleanses us.

Before we were saved,...we also had many idols. This also might have been our situation after we became backslidden and before we were revived. Consider how many idols you had before you were saved or revived. For some, an article of clothing is an idol....Once while Brother Watchman Nee was ministering in Shanghai, he suddenly pointed to a certain sister and asked, “How many chapters are there in Matthew?” She answered, “Twenty-six.” Then Brother Nee asked her how many buttons were on her long gown, and without hesitation she told him the correct number. Brother Nee went on to say, “You know your long gown so well. You even remember how many buttons it has. But you do not remember how many chapters there are in Matthew.” This simple illustration shows us that we may love an article of clothing more than we love the Lord Jesus. Anything that we love more than the Lord is an idol.

Some Christians have never shed a single tear for the Lord Jesus, but they have shed many tears for their clothing. This proves that they love clothing more than the Lord Jesus. Others may care for things such as a doctoral degree or a high position. Still others may desire fame or may want to make a name for themselves. All these things are idols. We need the Lord's redeeming blood to cleanse us not only from all our filthiness but also from all our idols. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 190-191)

Further Reading: Living a Life according to the High Peak of God's Revelation, chs. 4-5

« WEEK 12 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

2 Tim. 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

In His recovery by life the Lord gives us a new heart and a new spirit. Our heart is our loving organ, and our spirit is our receiving organ. While we are in a fallen or backslidden state, our heart toward the Lord is stony and hard, and our spirit is deadened (Eph. 2:1; 4:18). When the Lord saves us or revives us, He renews our heart, making our stony heart a heart of flesh, a heart that is soft and loving toward Him (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3). Furthermore, He enlivens and renews our spirit with His divine life (Col. 2:13). As a result, we love the Lord and desire Him with our renewed heart, and we can contact Him, receive Him, and contain Him by exercising our renewed spirit. (Ezek. 36:26, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action. This means that whenever you act, you act by your heart. Therefore, we may say that our heart is our representative in action, [our acting agent]. We have something in our inner being that represents us, and this representative is our heart. When a brother says to his wife, "Dear, I love you," this means that his heart loves her...Whenever we enjoy something or dislike something, it is our heart that enjoys or dislikes. Thus, our heart is our representative, the acting commissioner or ambassador, of our inner being.

God in His salvation promises to give us a new heart....The new heart in Ezekiel 36:26 does not refer to another heart; it refers to a renewed heart. The first characteristic of this renewed heart is that it turns to God. The turning of our heart to God is a very healthy sign that He has renewed it.

The second characteristic of a renewed heart is that it seeks purity. First Timothy 1:5 speaks of love out of a pure heart. In 2 Timothy 2:22 Paul encourages Timothy to be "with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."...According to the Bible, to have a pure heart is to have a heart with a single motive. Purity, therefore, is a matter of motive. If we do something with a double motive, our heart is not pure. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, pp. 182-184)

Since the heart is so vitally related to life, God has no other alternative but to deal with our heart that His life might be regulated out from us. Toward God, our heart has four great problems: hardness, impurity, unlovingness, and unpeacefulness. Hardness is a matter of the will, impurity is a matter not only of the mind but also of the emotion, unlovingness is a matter of the emotion, and unpeacefulness is a matter of the conscience. When God deals with our heart, He deals with these four aspects so that our heart may be soft, pure, loving, and at peace.

First, God wants our heart to be soft. To be soft means that the will of the heart toward God is submissive and yielding, not stiff-necked and rebellious. When God deals with our heart...He softens our hard, stony heart so that it becomes a soft heart of flesh.

Second, God wants our heart to be pure. A pure heart means a heart that sets its mind specifically on God. It is also a heart in which the emotion is exceedingly pure and simple toward God....It only loves God and wants God; besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire.

Third, God wants our heart to be loving. A loving heart means a heart in which the emotion loves God, wants God, thirsts after God, yearns for God, and has affection toward God.

Fourth, God wants our heart to be at peace. A heart at peace means a heart in which the conscience has no offense (Acts 24:16), no condemnation or reproach; it is safe and secure. (The Knowledge of Life, pp. 126-128)

Further Reading: The Knowledge of Life, ch. 10; CWWL, 1964, vol. 3, "The Economy of God," chs. 7-8; Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, msgs. 21-22

« WEEK 12 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Zech. 12:1 ...Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him.

2 Tim. 1:6-7 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God....For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

In the eyes of God, our human spirit is ranked with the heavens and the earth....Zechariah 12:1 says clearly that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. The heavens are for the earth; the earth is for man; and man has a spirit to contact God.

Our human spirit is important in our contacting God, and our contacting God is our worship to God. We cannot contact God without worshipping Him....John 4:24 [says] that God is Spirit and that we must worship Him in our spirit. We worship Him by exercising our spirit. If we are going to live a meaningful life, we should contact God. He is our source, and our spirit is our spiritual organ for us to contact Him.

In our Christian walk, we need to walk according to our spirit (Rom. 8:4b). When you ask me a question, I should not answer you from my soul. I should answer you from my spirit....We are spiritual men who walk, live, and have our being according to our spirit. (The Spirit with Our Spirit, pp. 72, 74)

Today's Reading

We also need to exercise our spirit. A loving heart is not sufficient. In addition to a loving heart, we need a renewed, receiving spirit. We had a human spirit before we were saved, but it was deadened. In Ephesians 2:1 Paul says that we were dead in offenses and sins....We were dead not in our body or in our soul but in our spirit. While we were living in our body, we were deadened in our spirit. When we were saved, the Lord Jesus enlivened our spirit. Thus, we now have an enlivened and renewed spirit.

One of the best ways to use our spirit to contact the Lord is to call, "O Lord Jesus!" When we exercise our spirit in this way, we have the sense of something moving deep within our being. That something is our spirit.

In his subtlety, Satan has hidden this matter of the human spirit from most Christians. When many believers read the Bible, they do not exercise their spirit but exercise only their mind. When we read the Bible, we need to exercise our spirit as well as our mind. We should never neglect our spirit. If we do not exercise our spirit, we cannot be proper Christians.

We should learn to exercise our spirit to be one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). This means that we need to realize that, in His inward recovery by life, He has given us a new spirit. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 193-195)

Second Timothy 1:6-7 indicates that we need to fan our spirit into flame....Our God-given spirit is what we must fan into flame....If you want to fan your spirit into flame, you need to open up your mouth, open up your heart, and open up your spirit. You need to open these three layers of your being. You have to use your mouth to say, "O Lord Jesus." But then you have to go deeper by using your mouth with your heart to say, "O Lord Jesus." Then you need to go even deeper by using your mouth with your heart and with your spirit to say, "O Lord Jesus." This is to open up your spirit from deep within. Then the fire burns.

The spirit given to us by God is of power, of love, and of sobermindedness. Power belongs to our will. Love belongs to our emotion. Sobermindedness belongs to our mind. God has given us a spirit of these three things. Our will should be strong, full of power; our emotion should be loving, full of love; and our mind should be sober, full of sobermindedness....We can do things because we have the capacity of power. We should not say that we do not love people, because we have the capacity of love. We should not say that we are in darkness, because we have the capacity of sobermindedness with a clear sky. (The Spirit with Our Spirit, pp. 80-83)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 1, "Life Messages, Volume 2," ch. 71; The Spirit with Our Spirit, ch. 7

« WEEK 12 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

[In Ezekiel 36:27] we see that the Lord said not only that He will give us a new heart and a new spirit but that He will put His Spirit within us, putting His Spirit into our spirit. We should not neglect our spirit, because our spirit is the vessel which contains the divine Spirit. When believers hear the word spirit, they usually think of the Holy Spirit. They seldom consider that they have a human spirit. Yes, we need the Holy Spirit, but we need to realize that the Holy Spirit is in our regenerated human spirit. “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit” (Rom. 8:16). Praise the Lord that we have a new heart and a new spirit and that we have the Holy Spirit within our spirit strengthening us all the time. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 195)

Today's Reading

God's commandments are according to His nature, and we have the nature of God within us because we have His Spirit within us. Now there is something within us that corresponds to God's law. God's Spirit within us contains God's nature, and God's nature corresponds to God's law. Because we have God's nature within us, it is easy for us to keep His law. Formerly it was difficult for us to love others, but now it is easy to love others and difficult to hate them because we have a new nature, God's nature, within us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 196)

The law of the Spirit of life is the subject of Romans 8....Life is the content and issue of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the ultimate and consummate manifestation of the Triune God after His being processed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection and becoming the indwelling, life-giving Spirit, who is life to all the believers in Christ. The law that has freed us from the law of sin [Rom. 8:2], which is of Satan, who dwells in the members of our fallen body (7:23, 17), is of this Spirit of life. It is this law, not God nor the Spirit, that works in us to deliver us from the working of the law of sin in our flesh and to enable us to know God and gain God and thereby live Him out. This law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous power of the Spirit of life. Such a spontaneous law works automatically under the condition that fulfills its requirements. (Rom. 8:2, footnote 1)

The Spirit of life is the Spirit of Christ, and Christ corresponds with the law of God. This Spirit within us spontaneously fulfills all the righteous requirements of the law through us when we walk according to Him. (Rom. 8:4, footnote 1)

Our human spirit is important because it is in this spirit that Christ and the Spirit indwell us, taking our spirit as God's habitation (2 Tim. 4:22a; Rom. 8:11; Eph. 2:22). If you do not have God in your spirit, your soul will also be empty. The soul was made to be a vessel to contain God as the contents. Romans 9 tells us clearly that we human beings are vessels to God, containers to contain God as our contents (vv. 21, 23). Today the Triune God is embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit.

As Christians, our spirit has been regenerated. To be regenerated is to be reinforced. Something stronger and richer has been added into our being....God has given us justification, reconciliation, and His full salvation. All these were given in addition to God's life and God's Spirit. Actually, all these heavenly things are included in God's life and God's Spirit, which have been added into our spirit. We have a regenerated and reinforced spirit, a very strong spirit, with a companion. This companion is the Triune God. The Triune God becomes our companion in our spirit. What an enriched spirit we have! (The Spirit with Our Spirit, pp. 73, 79)

Further Reading: The Spirit with Our Spirit, ch. 8

« WEEK 12 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:35 And they will say, This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.

37-38 Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Moreover for this I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock....So will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they will know that I am Jehovah.

A major point in Ezekiel 36 is the recovery of the good land, that is, the restoration of the full enjoyment of the riches of Christ (vv. 8-15, 33-36). Whenever we backslide and become fallen, we lose the rich enjoyment of Christ. Christ Himself is rich, but we may lose the enjoyment of His riches. We praise the Lord that in His recovery there is the restoration of the enjoyment of the riches of Christ.

Verse 24 says, “I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.” In His recovery, God brings us out from the world and brings us back to our own place. He returns us to Christ as our land.

In the Lord’s recovery there are two aspects...the outward recovery and the inward recovery. Suppose that you have fallen away from Christ, from the church life, and from the fellowship with the saints and have become involved with sinful, worldly things. But one day the Lord seeks you out and brings you back to Himself, to the church life, and to the fellowship with the saints. This is...an outward recovery...[to bring] you back to the good land....You still need the inward aspect of the Lord’s recovery, which is covered in 36:22-30. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 188-190, 189)

Today’s Reading

In Ezekiel 36:34-36 the Lord promised that the desolate and waste places would become like the garden of Eden. There...Christ as the tree of life, would be their rich supply. The local churches need to reach such a high condition that they are like the garden of Eden. Even today, often in the church meetings we have the sense that we are in the garden of Eden.

Ezekiel 36:37-38 says, “Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Moreover for this I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. Like the holy flock for sacrifices, like the flock of Jerusalem in her appointed feasts...” Here the Lord promised that He would bring in flocks of people. Although He has promised to do this, we still need to inquire of Him. This means that we need to pray for the increase, saying, “O Lord, flock people in. You promised this to us.”

In the past, whenever we prayed for an increase of number, the Lord answered. I feel that we need to pray more. The Lord promised, yet He needs our inquiring. He promised that He will increase our number by flocks of men, but we need to pray for this and ask Him to do it. I hope that the saints in all the local churches will pray definitely and specifically for the increase of numbers. We should never be content with our present number. Rather, we should all aspire to be doubled within a period of time. Thus, we need to pray, “Lord, flock people in.”

In 1963 in Los Angeles, we had only twenty to thirty people, but after we prayed for six months, the number was greatly increased. In Elden Hall we also prayed that the Lord would flock people in. We prayed, “Lord, bring flocks of men to us,” and the Lord heard this prayer. I feel that today we need to pray even more, standing upon and claiming Ezekiel 36:37-38 concerning the increase of numbers.

We should not say that numbers do not mean anything and that we do not care for numbers. We should not comfort ourselves with any failure in the matter of increase. We surely need the increase in numbers. We need to pray for the increase, claiming the Lord’s promise in Ezekiel 36. When some hear this, they may say that they care not for quantity but for quality. However, quality comes out of quantity. Therefore, we need to pray that the Lord will give us the increase and that He will bring in flocks of men. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 196-197)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 17

« WEEK 12 —HYMN

Hymns, #743

God created us His vessels

Various Aspects of the Inner Life — The New Heart and the New Spirit

743

1. God cre - at - ed us His ves - sels His ex - pres - sion to a - chieve;
Thus He made a heart to love Him And a spir - it to re - ceive.

The musical score is written on two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes. Chords are indicated above the staff: F, C7, F, C, F, Bb, Gm, and C. The second staff begins with a bass clef and the same key signature. The bass line consists of quarter and eighth notes. Chords are indicated below the staff: F, Bb, C, F, Bb, F, C7, and F. The lyrics are written below the staves, with the first line of the melody starting at measure 1 and the second line starting at measure 5.

2. With our heart we have to love Him,
With our spirit Him possess
As our life, of Him partaking,
That Himself we may express.
3. Satan has our heart corrupted,
To our spirit death did give,
That the Lord we should not contact
But by self attempt to live.
4. Thus the Lord in His salvation
Heart and spirit has renewed
To recover our receiving
And our loving aptitude.
5. It is by our heart's renewal
We may God in love pursue,
And in newness of the spirit
We may contact God anew.
6. Ever true and pure and single
To the Lord our heart must be,
Poor in spirit, ever seeking
God to contact constantly.
7. Keep our heart, Lord, in love's freshness,
And our spirit strengthen more,
That in newness of the spirit
We may touch Thee o'er and o'er.